





# I HAVE A MANSION IN THE POST-APOCALYPTIC WORLD

BOOK 01

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EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

# I Have a Mansion in the Post-apocalyptic World

(我在末世有套房)

by

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# Synopsis

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Ruins stretched across the landscape in the apocalypse after the nuclear war.

If you accidentally survived on the wasteland, then you must be ready to face the endless hunger, ceaseless dangers, the mad zombies at night, and the peculiar mutant creatures that are the aftermaths of the constant radiation.

But for Jiang Chen, this place was heaven.

Mansions stood tall, luxurious cars parked on the street, high tech products and gold abandoned everywhere.

What? You were the president of a game development company before the war? You were responsible for the development of the 3D virtual reality online multiplayer game? Well, that's great, why don't you come work for me. The salary is two pieces of bread a day.

iPhone? Ultra thin design? Don't you see that the phone I invented are thinner than condoms?

Aircraft carrier? Fighter jets? Oh, I have those things as well, but they are designed for space combat.

Watch the story of Jiang Chen, who possessed the ability to travel through space and time, as he witness the creation of an

empire stretched across space and time..

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# Chapter 1: A Disaster Caused by a Can of Coke

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A drop of cold sweat dripped down his forehead, as Jiang Chen stared at the massive pair of boobs in front him. They were at least size 36D.

Below her eyebrows was a pair of valiant looking eyes, a beautiful nose, and a delicate mouth. However, her malicious expression certainly tainted her beauty. A pitch black pistol and a wicked looking whip, were held in her hands.

If the surrounding was decorated with a few more sexually suggestive items, every man in the world would fantasize about what could happen next.

Fantasize my a\*s!

Jiang Chen's heart swelled with regret and fear. He did not feel any sense of pleasure or consider the possibility of being aroused.

His pants all the sudden felt tight. He must be delusional right now. [There is no way I am a masochist.]

He knew he had no weird fetishes. So, any physical reaction would be an accident in this dire situation.

"Name?" The busty girl asked. She was wearing a black leather

jacket, with a pair of jeans that has started to fade after too many washes. She shook her hair, as she forcefully stepped onto the chair's arm.

"Jiang Chen..." He swallowed, as he responded truthfully. As a civilized man himself, he has never seen a girl so barbaric.

The girl raised her eyebrows. "What a girly name?"

[Why don't you ask my mother? Dammit!] Of course, he could only say that in his head. He feared that the moment he opened his mouth, a bullet would create a new hole on his forehead.

Yes, this hottie had a pistol on her, which made the atmosphere not even remotely romantic.

"I was born in the morning, hence the name morning (Cheng) in my name," Jiang Chen mumbled. The name was not girly by any means. However, the fact that he looked very delicate, didn't contribute to his cause. Even if he had a masculine name, the contrast would be even odder.

"Don't get off topic." The girl lashed the whip onto the sofa beside him. The loud cracking sound scared Jiang Chen so much, that he curled into the chair. "I am not interested in your mom."

[God, you were the one that asked.] Jiang Chen swore in his mind, as his face paled.



"You have the potential to be a great looking guy." the beauty smiled, as she approached him. She touched Jiang Chen's face with the side of her whip. "You are going to answer my questions. If you dare to lie, I don't mind creating a few scars on your lovely face."

Jiang Chen's face turned red as he tried to hold back his scream. [Why do I feel so violated?]

"Where are you from?" The girl questioned as she gazed directly at him.

"I am from the north." Jiang Chen responded with a lie. Of course, he never believed that the girl could see through him. [Wanghai City? Here is Wanghai City? This deserted place?]

"This can of cola, where did you find it?" The girl's pronunciation was odd as if she has never heard someone say Coke before.

Jiang Chen felt the girl's voice transform as her breathing rapidly grew. The tone was filled with an intense lust, or greed?

"Coke... it's a type of pop."

"No sh\*t! I know it is pop. I am asking you, where it is from!" The girl chugged the coke. As soon as she finished, she exhaled with relief. Then she threw the can onto the ground, and lashed her whip onto the poor sofa once again.

Jiang Chen stared directly at the odd looking gun pointed

directly at his forehead.

A drop of sweat dripped down his face. He steadied his breath as he tried to remain calm. "I can't explain that."

"Do you want to die?"

"Is this the way you treat someone who just saved your life?" With a sudden burst of courage, he argued back.

After a brief moment of silence, she let out a slow sigh. She put the gun away and threw the whip onto the ground. "Fine, I did cross the line." Despite admitting her fault, she had no intention of letting Jiang Chen go.

[Since she only whipped the sofa, she probably has no ill-intention after all.] Jiang Chen thought in his head.

"Trust me. I have no harmful intentions," She said. However, Jiang Chen was uncertain about how long her conscience would last, so he continued to make up stories.

"No harmful intentions?"

"Like how I saved you from starvation? If I told you anything today, it would make both of our lives more complicated than it needs to be." Jiang Chen continued to respond with a secretive tone. His words left a lot to the imagination.

"Haha," the girl forced a careless laugh. But the uncertainty in her eyes was clearly evident.

"Maybe we can partner up! I just got here and... how can I explain this. Everything here is terrible. I need a guide, and I can pay you handsomely for it." He proposed an offer with a luring hint in his voice. He was using the stick and the carrot strategy.

"Oh? You are from the Northern Alliance?" The girl asked with her eyebrows raised.

On this wasteland, if there are any signs of law and order; it must be the distant alliance on the northern tundra. They were not a target of the nuclear destruction, nor were there any infectious disease breakouts. Hence, order remained on the land far away.

However, order was a relative term; they lacked real justice because slavery, corruption, and civil war all still existed on the land. Only the slightly higher food production made the area, made it somewhat more attractive. Overall, it was no better than the anarchic Wanghai City.

"No, I am only from somewhere relatively well off. Hmm, and I am collecting some useful resources for someone. At the same time, surplus commodities are disposed-like the can of pop you just finished, or the three cans of food that you devoured clean." Jiang Chen did not continue with the disguise as a member of the Northern Alliance. What if she realized he was lying after all.

The best idea right now was to say that he came from a distant place. A place that nobody visited before.

The girl blushed as she heard the words "devoured clean" and she realized that her etiquette at the time must not have been the finest. She stared at Jian Cheng with a fierce look. Jian Cheng laughed as he dismissed the idea. He knew the negotiation was successful.

"I don't know what you guys want in this city. All the supermarkets, storages, and even refrigerators are raided clean. There is no way you can even find one piece of bread."

"My fair lady, what is your name?" Jiang Chen said, shaking his head.

"Sun Jiao," She responded, as she again raised her eyebrows. With a devious smile on her face, she said, "Let me get this clear, if the partnership involves anything strange, I might blow your head up."

"Don't worry, miss." Jiang Chen sighed. There was no way he would get in bed with a girl that could kill him at any moment. "I only need an experienced guide and, do you think I lack food?"

"Then what exactly are you searching for? Could it be... for slaves?" Sun Jiao paused for a second before she maliciously gazed at Jiang Chen.

Of course, if he had plenty of food, then he must have farms or plantations, and related production facility. Sun Jiao's first instinct was that this guy might be a slave trader. Slaves were the finest labor force on the wasteland and slave trading was considered to be the norm. However, Sun Jiao thoroughly hated slave trading because a slave trader abducted her sister. It would be fine if she got sold into a factory, but if she got sold into prostitution or even to the cannibals, it would be a complete nightmare.

"No, no, no. This is a complete misunderstanding," Jiang Chen explained. "I don't need slaves. I need technology."

"Technology?" Sun Jiao seemed confused.

"Yes, technology. Just like the laser gun you are holding and the computer on your arm. While we have those things, we can't produce them ourselves. Therefore, we decided to come to this deserted city to find some old technology."

"These things?" Jiang Chen's question caused a mixture of confusion and suspicion. "These things are hard to make? In Liu Ding Village a lot of people can assemble these."

[Dammit,] Jiang Chen swore in his mind, but he remained calm.

"That was only an example. Our technology in food production and transportation is highly advanced, but our general technology is rather lackluster. Which is why I am here." He explained, impressed by his improvisation as it was far better than he

thought.

He noticed that while this world had previously made significant technological advancements in the past, the civilization was in complete ruins after the nuclear war. Especially since infections broke out across the land, it was a miracle that humanity still existed.

The state of this wasteland after the fallout was rather strange. Highly advanced levitated cars existed simultaneously with internal combustion engine vehicles. While some advanced technology were preserved, the civilization undoubtedly regressed.

"Whatever." Sun Jiao shrugged. With interest in her voice, she opened her mouth. "Now, let's talk about my compensation."

"What do you want to be paid in," After a short pause, Jian Chen asked. He was unsure what the currency was in this world.

"C-type battery, food, and crystals are all fine. Though personally, I prefer food." Sun Jiao responded. Then with desire filled eyes, she asked, "Oh, do you have more of those curry chicken?"

"You finished them all." Jiang Chen sighed with a fake heartbroken look. He has never even seen batteries or crystals before. So without a doubt, food would be the best choice.

"Oh, I am sorry," Sun Jiao said with an awkward tone. All of a

sudden, she turned back into her usual malicious character and forcefully stepped onto the armrest. Then she bargained, "salary will be ten cans of food per month. You are also responsible for my meals!"

"Deal!"

Jiang Chen's direct response made Sun Jiao guilty about her rather unreasonable demand. Although on this wasteland only fools had a conscience, conscience always existed inside people's heart.

Cruelty was only a protective response for survival.

"I will be responsible for your safety." Sun Jiao added as guilt overwhelmed her.

[No sh\*t! If I die, who will pay you?] Jiang Chen responded viciously in his head. The compensation was nothing for him, but it would still cost him around one hundred dollars.

"Ok, my beautiful bodyguard, can you untie me now?" The crisis was finally alleviated as Jiang Chen finally let out a long sigh. His limbs almost losing all sense of feeling. Sun Jiao casually took out a dagger and sliced through the rope.

Jiang Chen moved a little as he stared at Sun Jiao with a sad look. Then, he went and picked up his empty backpack.

Sun Jiao forced an awkward smile and pretended that she never searched his bag.

"What's next? Get out of here?"

"Get out? Why? This will be our temporary meeting location."

Outside the window, the mega metropolis already lost its liveliness. The once crowded streets were now empty, without a soul in sight. The endless amount of zombies replaced what was once a vibrant city. The occasional howl and scream from unknown creatures also traversed through the dead city. Guns fired in the not so far off distance, mixed with barely audible noises. In the city permeated with death, familiar battles occurred every day. Zombies against humans, humans against humans...

Through the undusted stained window, Jiang Chen saw the danger, the death, and the opportunity of gold everywhere.



# Chapter 2: Interdimensional Bracelet

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The universe existed as a multiverse.

A butterfly's wing in the Amazon rain forest may have caused the tornado in UA Texas. The butterfly effect could exaggerate any small changes to infinity. It could alter the path of the future.

Therefore, the understanding of the future is extremely uncertain and relative.

Jiang Chen, Male, 23 years old. An undergraduate student. He spent some time after graduation as a sales associate in a clothing store but has since been laid-off. The increased financial pressure forced him to make a difficult decision: to search for another job in Wanghai City or to go back to his hometown.

In his opinion, he did not want to give up so easily. To live in a major metropolitan like Wanghai was his dream since he was a child, and it was also what his parent's expected. For someone that did not experience the world yet, he was eager to explore what the world had to offer.

However, he knew that the journey would be difficult. He got drunk. It was the first time since graduation where he drank alone till he passed out. After he let out all his frustration and sorrow, dizziness struck his head, and he became immediately unconscious. An unknown metal object directly hit his arm and fused with it. It disappeared as quickly as it has appeared. It was almost as if it never existed in the first place.

Then, he discovered a peculiar ability – time and dimensional travel

Of course, it took him several months before he realized it.

The strange looking pattern surrounded his right wrist like a watch. If one examined it carefully, the bracelet was shaped like an odd looking tattoo.

Then it obviously something was wrong because he never had a tattoo. He did not know why he became the chosen one. However, he understood at that moment, this was the opportunity of a lifetime.

Time travel? Dimensional travel? He didn't have enough knowledge to understand these strange phenomenas. But one time he was struck by electricity and felt completely fine. That was when he discovered the tattoo's empty bar filled up after absorbing around 100 voltages of power. Then, it met the requirements to perform "multiverse travel." Multiverse travel itself costed half of the energy. Therefore, completely filling 100 voltages of electricity would allow for a round trip through time and dimensions at the expense of around 50 dollars. It was very economical. Not only did the tattoo had the ability to travel, but it also contained an alternative dimension that he could visit at any time. Hence, it was a storage dimension roughly one square meter cubed size. But because it costed energy to store and retrieve items, Jiang Chen preferred to use a backpack to store items. If he was not careful and lost the means to charge the energy in the apocalyptic world, then there was no way to come home.

Jiang Chen had a feeling that the energy storage could be upgraded, including the storage dimension. The functionality definitely could also be improved. He just didn't understand how at the moment.

Charging the power was simple. Jiang Chen only needed to put his finger into an electric socket. Although this was not aesthetically pleasing in any way, it was perfect for getting the job done. How did he figure out? Like mentioned before, it was completely by accident.

The first time he time traveled, he found himself in an abandoned residence. The dust covered bed along with the corroded furniture spelled the timeliness of the place. He checked his surroundings as he began examining this timeworn house. With the information from a half-broken storage tape and old newspapers lying around, he gained some partial understanding of this world.

This world was a parallel universe similar to earth. However, the technology was clearly far more advanced. High rise buildings spanned across the landscape, but there were no traces of any civilization. Zombies and mutants occupied the once busy streets. Jiang Chen did not dare to step out without a weapon.

The time was the year 2190; the location was still Wai Hai City. However, the difference between the two time periods was night and day.

The year 2150, global warming intensified. Excessive extraction caused shortages in all kinds of resources. An economic crisis ensued.

The year 2164, a political crisis in Poland triggered a war between Europe and China. The red army began invading westwards. The global politics, as a result, were in a tense period. It was worth mentioning that in this parallel universe, USSR was not dissolved in 1991, hence the global politics were divided into three organizations. First, US-led alliances known as NATO, a Soviet-led Europa known as CCCP, and lastly, the Chinese formed PCA with the Southeast Asian countries. The rest of the forces remained independent.

The year 2171, the tension on Europa escalated as the CCCP declared war on the PCA. Both parties accused the others of initiating the warfare which caused the start of the third world war.

In the same winter, China and Japan launched a naval war over the conflict in the South China Sea. NATO and CCCP declared cooperation as fires spread across Asia. That year, Mongolia experienced a political crisis which caused further escalation between CCCP and PCA, with both sides amassing tremendous firepower on the borders.

The year 2172, the first nuclear weapon was detonated by the CCCP in Paris, which officially brought the third world war into tactical nuclear warfare.

The year 2173, this modern warfare was in a surprising stalemate.

The entire world experienced nuclear fallout as the habitable, without a doubt, received significant destruction. The nuclear winter covered 80% of the land in snow. Nobody thought that such an ironic cause would end global warming. Refugees, starvation, diseases were all symptoms of this modern warfare. It only took two years to destroy humanity entirely. The total economic losses far exceeded the combined losses of the previous world wars. Due to this, peace came without a decisive victory for either side. Everyone knew that if the war continued, no one would survive.

New Year 2174, a peace treaty was negotiated and enacted. "Habitat Revitalization Program" was established to remove nuclear fallout. All nations participated in the funding of the program.

Fall of year 2174, the United Nations announced the abortion of the "Habitat Revitalization Program" as the cells used to remove nuclear waste experienced uncontrolled mutation. At the same time, due to the attack by unknown militants, the mutated cells began to spread into major cities. The infected humans turned into zombies, as the human civilization entered a biological apocalypse. The law and order that once governed civilization, shattered in days.

The year 2176, The United Nations sent six colony exploration ships towards Kepler B in Alpha Centauri. These ships contained the last hope for civilization. These ships were meant to plant a seed in the universe, in hopes of finding a new world. However, this was completely irrelevant for the humans still fighting on the ground.

In the same year, the United Nations were dissolved.

The information contained in the newspaper only lasted till the year 2176. The remainder of the news came from an ancient diary. From the electronic clock that still ticked in the drawer, the time was June 2190.

By coincidence, the world he lived in was also June.

But within this timeline, civilization destroyed itself in just five years

After he had made a brief stop, Jian Cheng chose to return to the modern world. There were too many unknown dangers that it would be unwise to continue. He must first be thoroughly prepared.

After he had rested for two days, he bought a box of canned food, a box of sausages, and a box of instant noodles. Even if he did not consider staying overnight at the dangerous place, he brought three days of food, just to be safe.

The zombies during the day time seemed to have lost the majority of their powers. It eased the exploration in that area, as Jian Cheng carefully stepped across the middle of the street. He avoided the area concentrated with zombies before he found a mansion.

The high wall and Iron Gate made it look very safe. The yellow

grass on the ground made the place look fairly outdated. The marble sculptures by the gate were no longer recognizable due to the corrosion from the acid rain. It was evident that the world was filled with pollution.

As to why he chose this place in particular? The answer was quite obvious. The rich looking mansion would contain some valuable items.

To his surprise, he did not find anything valuable, but he did find a girl that was almost starved to death.

Maybe it was because of the girl's beauty that caused him to put his guard down, or because of his experience from the civilized world that made him not think about the possible danger. When he saw the despair in the girl's eyes, she looked so powerless. He took out a bottle of water from his bag and fed her the water slowly.

[Saving the girl is the most important priority because maybe she will marry me in the end?]

Immediately, Jiang Chen took out the curry chicken from his bag. After the girl had smelled the aroma from the can, the same wimpy eyes looked at Jiang Chen filled with despair. He was a virgin himself, so there was no way he could have resisted the seduction, especially when a beautiful girl gazed at him with her watery eyes. He felt a wave of joy both spiritually and physically. So he took out his spoon in good heart and began feeding the girl with the flawless body.

After... well, there was nothing after.

Jiang Chen deeply regretted his decision.

The girl's action accurately defined the story of the farmer and the snake.

After going through a couple of pieces of bread and a canned curry chicken, the girl whipped out the pistol without hesitation. She pressed the gun against Jiang Chen's forehead as Jiang Chen was shocked in place. She then skillfully tied him onto the chair, as she interrogated Jiang Chen with what once belong to the former mansion owner, the whip.

Now, Jiang Chen realized what it meant to be carrying a full bag of food. He was fortunate that he met Sun Jiao who still had some conscience. If he instead met some cannibals or slave traders, he probably would have ended up as either food or product.

Of course, Jiang Chen could always activate the tattoo and travel back, but that meant his biggest secret would be exposed. If this girl "camped spawn," then he could face even more danger.

He did not want to give up this "treasure land."

Also, it took time to activate the time travel function. If the girl realized that something was wrong, there was no guarantee that she would not pull the trigger.



He didn't want to risk it. The good thing was that they were able to reach an agreement.

"How would you transport the supplies here?" Sun Jiao questioned with confusion in her voice while reinforcing the mansion's external defense.

"Of course my partners have ways to do so, you don't have to worry about it." Jiang Chen continued to bullshit.

The mansion had quite a bit of cash, but the value of cash in this world was drastically different compared to the original world. Jiang Chen wanted to look for gold and other valuables, but it was evident that the previous owner did not store any at home.

The painting on the wall may be quite expensive, but of course, these artists did not exist in the world Jiang Chen belongs to yet. So these painting would be worthless. The mansion, however, did contain some highly advanced electronics such as a hologram TV and automatic cooking equipment. But he soon realized that none of it functioned properly, so Sun Jiao was quick to answer his confusion.

"Oh, these things... " After the nuclear explosion, the majority of the electronics ceased to function. But some parts were quite useful and valuable for the survivors.

Jiang Chen let out a sigh as he gave up on the plan of selling these electronics in the modern world.

However, since these existed before, there must be someone who could produce this equipment again. Jiang Chen knew that if he traded with food, there would be plenty of "geniuses" that would be willing to work for him. In this apocalyptic world, these skills were worth almost nothing.

For those technologists, if it was not high-end military weaponry knowledge, their life was no different than someone who lived in the slump.

Sun Jiao didn't know what Jiang Chen saw in this mansion. Nevertheless, since her employer said that work needed to be done, she didn't refuse.

"Let me be honest here; there is not much value in reinforcing this structure. If we don't make a lot of noise, those brainless zombies will not find their way here. The area is also free from powerful mutants. This is a complete waste of..."

"Enough, I am not preventing the zombies. I know that if I don't bother those disgusting things, they will not go out of their way to bother me. I am preventing intruders because I am pretty sure you don't want your throat slit while you are sleeping." He rambled as he gave Sun Jiao a hard stare.

"Okay boss." Sun Jiao rolled her eyes as she hammered the last nail into the wood. She wanted to argue that nobody would bother entering into these buildings because they have obviously been looted.

As to why she is here, that was her secret.

"Do you have the map of this place?" Jiang Chen crossed his legs as he sat on the moldy sofa. He did not feel the slightest guilt for making a girl work this hard. It certainly was not the most enjoyable experience having a gun pointed at his head.

Sun Jiao was experienced in this type of work. She quickly reinforced the mansion with any materials she found.

"What's your EP? I can directly send it to you."

"EP?" Jiang Chen was confused.

"It is this thing." Sun Jiao pointed at the computer on her arm. She grinned as if she had heard a joke. "You don't have one?"

"... I can buy one," Jiang Chen forced a smile. He felt uncivilized in front of this girl.

"That's hard to imagine that you have the courage to explore the city without EP. Are you not afraid of the radiation level?" Sun Jiao sighed as she took out what looked like a large electronic watch from her backpack. She threw it to Jiang Chen. "Try it out."

"Seems fitting...where did you get it?" Jiang Chen played with the EP. He was amazed by this world's technological advancement,

as the EP was as light as a feather. The crystal screen displayed Jiang Chen's biological stats. It seemed to be a health monitor device.

"I found it from an unlucky guy's body." Sun Jiao grinned. The smile was certainly delightful, but a shiver went down Jiang Chen spine as if he just saw the devil.

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User Name: Jiang Chen

Muscle Strength: 12

Bone Strength: 10

Reflex: 11

Brain Cell Strength: 14

Radiation Level: 11 (Safe)

Irregular Status: None

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Cold sweat appeared on his forehead as he saw the radiation

level. He almost forgot that radiation saturated the world from top to bottom. He wasn't clear as to what it meant by a radiation level of 11, but he knew that before coming here, there was no way he could have been exposed to radiation.

"None of your abilities exceed 20... Come on, are you even a man?" Sun Jiao glanced at Jiang Chen with an arrogant expression.

"Do you want to try?" Jiang Chen responded with a furious voice.

"I am standing right here, why don't you try?" Sun Jiao stepped onto the armrest of the sofa again, her eyes full of defiance.

[There was no way I will let this go. Nah, it is better to stay calm.]

Jiang Chen was quick to admit defeat. There was no way he could beat this "barbaric" girl. Even if the slim possibility became a reality that they did hookup, he had to prevent the girl from biting his dick off. He was confident that she would do it, if given the chance.

For these types of enjoyable actions, it would be more appropriate to do it in the modern world. If he had the money, girls would follow.

For no apparent reason, a person popped into Jiang Chen's head. A girl who fired him and made him lose his source of income. The girl who made life in Wanghai City miserable. The girl who always

held a bit\*h face and a terrible attitude.

"What happened, my little boss, why are you silent all of a sudden?" Sun Jiao emphasized on the word little as she looked at him mockingly.

"Nothing. I just remembered something from the past."

Sun Jiao, surprised by the calm voice that answered, felt a chill run down her spine. Although she was not afraid of the guy that didn't even hit 20 in any aspects of combat, her years of fighting instinct rarely lied.

Sun Jiao was smart to keep her silence. There was no reason to offend free food. Life without the need to worry about food was something Sun Jiao never imagine. That curry chicken was amazingly delicious. On this wasteland, it would be fortunate to have a single piece of bread. The majority of the people here lived off of nutrient supplies. Something that never made you full, but kept you alive.

Also, the immature boss seemed like a genuine person.

Don't be confused, the word genuine person had an adverse connotation on the wasteland. However, much to her surprise, she would rather spend time with "Mr. Good Man" than the "normal" wasteland person. At least she did not need to worry about waking up and realizing that she was tied up.

She thought about it, and with her slightly cracked lip, she let slip a small but delightful laugh.

"Lady, could you not laugh so maliciously?" He didn't know why, even though her smile was beautiful, it made Jiang Chen shiver.

"Did I? Don't you think I am very attractive?"

"Do I answer yes, or no..." Jiang Chen murmured as he stared at the gorgeous face.

# Chapter 3: I Need Gold

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The next morning, Sun Jiao was delegated by Jiang Chen to explore the commercial banking building near Qingpu. Sun Jiao was curious as to what was at the bank, and Jiang Chen answered with a direct response.

“I need the gold from there.”

The world here was full of treasure. Any of the civilian products could easily out tech the prototypes in the science labs back in the modern world. But, it was impractical to sell it there. Therefore, a highly valuable commodity that exchanged smoothly would be gold.

Jiang Chen guessed that in a structureless apocalyptic world, gold had no practical value. In a place where everyone starved, no one would trade food for some shiny metal.

He was absolutely correct.

Sun Jiao wanted to know what gold was good for, but Jiang Chen did not want to share. So, she stopped being persistent about the question.

A small incident also happened in the morning.

After she opened her eyes, Jiang Chen placed a piece of bread in front of Sun Jiao. Sun Jiao snagged the toast as she looked at Jiang



Chen cautiously.

“Speak your mind, what do you want?”

“Want? Didn’t you say I have to take care of your meals?” Jiang Chen rolled his eyes up. He was not that desperate to sleep with someone that could bite his dick off. Once he had the money in the modern world, girls would follow.

She was shocked for a brief moment before she realized it was part of the compensation package.

“This is breakfast. Three meals a day, but you probably have to eat outside for lunch. Let me grab a can for you.” Even if this girl completely looted the bag, there was still food in the storage dimension. There was plenty of energy left to grab a can.

Sun Jiao was genuinely surprised. Her eyes felt watery. She saw too many tragedies and deaths over food, but this was the first time someone was afraid that she would go hungry.

She grabbed the canned food. Sun Jiao’s didn’t want to look Jiang Chen in the eyes. She had the intention of robbing this guy and using him as a hostage in exchange for food from his partner.

Even though she immediately rejected that thought, the idea still indeed existed. She felt a profound sense of guilt.

“Breakfast... What is breakfast?” Sun Jiao feasted on the bread

with her mouth full of food. She looked quite barbaric, but it was a rather amusing sight to see.

“If you don’t eat breakfast, it may increase your chance of getting stomach diseases.” Jiang Chen muttered as he almost ignored that this was a different world. Most of the people were used to the uncertainty of food. “If you eat food in the morning, it would make you more energetic.”

“Thank ... you.”

“Huh?” The voice was so faint that he couldn’t entirely make out what she said.

“Nothing.” Sun Jiao licked the crumbs off of her lips as she savored the last piece of the bread. She looked at her rather greasy hands but resisted the temptation to lick her fingers. It was the first time she had the strange desire to save her face. She didn’t want someone to think she was barbaric, although that wasn’t necessarily the right way to put it either.

“I will do my best to find the gold in the bank’s vault... but it would be much harder to move them back here. “

Yes, this deserted city was full of abandoned vehicles. The EMP created by the nuclear weapon had destroyed the majority of the electronics in this city. Advanced technology became an obstacle to survival as the cars on the street were all products of the advancement. Even the internal combustion cars were integrated with high tech parts. Therefore, these cars were completely

useless.

Without the proper maintenance and replacement by a professional, it was almost impossible to find a drivable car.

“Be careful. The goal is to understand the area. I want to know the surroundings and the exact location of the gold. That should be all. Try to come back before it gets dark.”

“Ok, I know.” Sun Jiao waved her hand as she inspected her equipment one last time. “Wanghai City’s night is full of danger. These zombies are much more intelligent without sunlight.”

“Oh, can I see your EP status?” As Sun Jiao was about to depart, Jiang Chen opened his mouth and asked all of a sudden. He was curious as to what kind of ridiculous stats this girl had to beat him in one move.

Surprised, Sun Jiao immediately waved her EP. Jiang Chen was stunned.

\*\*\*\*

User Name: Sun Jiao

Muscle Strength: 44

Bone Strength: 61

Reflex: 40

Brain Cell Strength: 13

Note: Level C Repair Vaccine, T-Virus Vaccine.

\*\*\*\*

Jiang Chen never imagined that her delicate arms could exert three times his strength. Was that even humanly possible?!

After he made sure Sun Jiao left, Jiang Chen immediately traveled back to the modern world.

The time in both worlds was parallel. Therefore, it flowed at the same rate.

The battery, of course, cannot be charged in the apartment. As it would take who knows how long to charge 100 volts there. If Sun Jiao did not find him after she came back, there would be a lot of trouble. Thus, to charge, he had to steal electricity from elsewhere.

He sneaked into a small power substation in a neighboring community. With a profound sense of guilt, he cut open the rubber that transported electricity. He then sighed deeply, as he placed his right hand onto the wire.

The open current caused a flurry of sparks. The energy bar on his wrist was charged almost immediately. But of course, the entire community's power jumped.

“Dammit, what’s wrong with the electricity company? Why did the power jump again? My ranked game...”

“Why do we have no power again? I am pissed...”

Waves of roars emerged from the neighboring community as residents searched for the cause. Without even closing the lid to the power substation, Jiang Chen immediately snuck away. He chose this place because it lacked surveillance.

Full of guilt, Jiang Chen escaped back into his rented apartment. “It looks like the power issue is an immediate concern. Should I ask someone to upgrade the circuit? But it would be difficult to explain the situation without causing suspicion. Should I move to another place? Or rent somewhere that can sustain large voltage machinery? Dammit, it would be better if I could replace electricity as the source of power.”

To better visualize the remaining battery, Jian Chen used a ruler to mark the energy bar with small increments.

Jiang Chen packed the food into his backpack as he envisioned his life in the future. At the same time, he ordered boxes of canned food, instant noodles and bread from Taobao. Jiang Chen looked at his near zero bank account balance, but he was not upset at all. He understood that very soon, the money he just spent would be

pocket change for him in the future.

The entire bank's gold! That would be a lot of money.

The only thing close to resembling his feeling was winning the lottery.

He also brought bandages, medicine, and other medical supplies. He estimated that he would spend quite some time in the post-apocalyptic world. He then spent 10% of the energy to pack two boxes of canned food and four boxes of instant noodle into the storage dimension. Although it took energy to store, it was better to be prepared.

He lit up a cigarette, as he placed his finger into the electrical socket. He waited as the battery charged. It would be a hassle to steal electricity again.

To pass the time, he played with the computer folded around his left arm.

The radiation level concerned Jiang Chen. He did not want to be exposed to possible diseases caused by radiation. He opened the help manual for radiation levels and studied through the notes. To his surprise, once the radiation level surpassed level 50, the user's health would be affected. It was recommended to store some iodine in the EP to reduce radiation exposure.

He pressed the iodine extraction button as a thin needle appeared

from the side of the EP. He had studied it before he placed the needle into the iodine alcohol on the counter.

The color of the iodine alcohol began fading, as it slowly turned colorless.

He stared at the slow moving iodine meter and the reduced radiation level. Surprised by the outcome, the problem that bothered him was easily solved.

In this case, he only needed to purchase some iodine pills from the pharmacy to resolve the radiation problem.

The fully charged Jiang Chen stretched his arms. He walked into the kitchen and grabbed a few ingredients from the fridge. He cooked tomato fried eggs and pepper roasted meat, and sat down to enjoy his lunch with a cold beer. He gulped down the beer and let out an emotional sigh.

This simple meal would cost countless amounts of gold in the apocalypse. In that troubled world, gold would not be more valuable than rock. From Sun Jiao's pure joy and satisfaction in devouring that can of food, Jian Cheng knew how important food must be in that world.

Jiang Chen imagined taking out a can of food at Liuding Town, and the countless attractive women that would sleep with him.

He finished the last bite of rice. He chewed on it carefully, as his

mind wandered elsewhere.

[If world war three broke out in this world, what happened in the apocalyptic world would be repeated.]

He shivered at the thought and was afraid to think further.

“Haha, why did I start to think about these weird questions? I need to figure my life out first,” he mocked at himself as he shook his head.

The first important step was to get the gold and then convert it into currency. Then, spend some time enjoying the life of a millionaire.

The first step would be to buy a mansion. A car would be necessary too.

Girlfriend? Why worry about that when there's so much money?

Jiang Chen washed the dishes before putting them away neatly. He then picked up his heavy backpack.

Time travel. Wait.

He seemed to have thought of something. He opened the fridge and grabbed a can of coke.



Time travel initiated.

## Chapter 4: Gold Bar

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It took only a second, before Jiang Chen stepped onto the dusty hardwood floor.

He checked the energy bar on his wrist. To his surprise, it only cost him 40% this time to complete the travel. Maybe the energy storage upgraded with the number of the times charged?

Jiang Chen shook his head. It was great news for him, but he couldn't why it happened.

As he sat on the luxurious sofa, he enjoyed the comfortable life not common in the modern world. He lit a cigarette and watched time pass.

From the mold-filled window, Jiang Chen saw a glimpse of Sun Jiao's shadow in the distance. He took out his binoculars to confirm before he opened the door to let her in.

"This is the gold you wanted." He caught the bag and both of his hands suddenly dropped. Happiness overflowed his heart, as the bag was hefty. The bag weighed at least a couple of kilograms, but the girl threw it like a volleyball. The amount of power she possessed was daunting.

Jiang Chen glanced at her arms. Her slim arms didn't contain any signs of muscle.

“That was so tiring. The bank had zombies everywhere. It took me almost two batteries of ammo to completely get rid of those gross creatures. The vault was also sealed by a heavy layer of steel boards that I couldn’t open. I got these gold bars from the VIP room.”

Sun Jiao wiped the sweat off of her forehead and threw her backpack onto the ground. Even if the gold bars only weighed a couple of kilograms, combined with her equipment and supply, she almost encumbered 20 kilograms while traversing the long distance.

“Catch!”

“Hmm? This is ...” Sun Jiao caught the coke as she gazed at him.

“You seemed to have liked it.” He was a bit embarrassed after Sun Jiao stared at him for so long.

Her lips moved without a word. After moments of silence, she resumed her usual boldness. She opened the can and took a big sip out of the coke.

“Gulp, Gulp... Haha, this is awesome. This weather is so ridiculously hot. Hmm, this is cold?” Sun Jiao looked at Jiang Chen suspiciously.

“The fridge in the kitchen is still usable. The photocell and solar panel is working in this place.” He did not lie about this. Even

though most of the electronics were destroyed, the power system somehow remained intact.

Maybe someone lived here and fixed some of the electronics. But from the layers of dust on the ground, that was a long time ago.

“That’s fine. You wouldn’t tell me where this Coke came from even if I asked.” Sun Jiao waved her hand to dismiss the thought. “Ok, what’s next? If we were to blow open the vault and move the gold here, it would take some professional help. At least, we need powerful explosives, or skilled hackers to break the electronic lock.”

“Where can we find them?” The explosives were a problem. It was almost impossible to buy them in large quantities in the modern world because of its restrictive nature, especially given Jiang Chen’s social status.

“A lot of survivor bases have them, like Liuding Town.” Envy flowed out of her eyes, as she gazed into the distance. “That’s a place people consider fun, even on wasteland...”

“Is it far from here?”

“Not too far, but a bit expensive. Except for the resident who owns the property and the labor who lost their freedom, visitors must pay one energy unit worth of crystals, or equivalently priced items to enter.”

“One energy unit of crystals?” Jiang Chen was confused.

“It’s this thing.” Sun Jiao searched in her pocket before grabbing a piece of darkened green crystal. “This piece of crystal has about 37 energy units left. You can use EP to check. These are quite difficult to find because only powerful mutants possess them on the back of their heads. If possible, I never want to meet those things again...”

Creatures that made this girl afraid? The thought of it sent a shiver down Jiang Chen’s spine.

He took the crystal and a faint attractive force pulled at his right arm. He was shocked. This thing could be used to charge the tattoo.

Jiang Chen’s facial expression remained calm. He played with it for a moment before returning it to Sun Jiao.

“What is one energy unit of crystals worth?”

“One-tenth of a can of meat or half of a normal can of food, ten nutrient supplies, one c-type battery, or three battery ammo. You can exchange so many things with it. This type of energy source is considered currency by many survival bases. You could even find a woman to sleep with you there.” Sun Jiao looked at Jiang Chen mockingly. She enjoyed teasing this little guy.

“Hmm...37 energy units of crystal. I’ll use four cans of food in

exchange?”

“Deal.” Without hesitation, Sun Jiao threw the crystal into Jiang Chen’s hands. However, as if she just thought of something, she hesitantly explained, “Even if you have quite a lot of food, you lost out on the deal. If you ever trade like this in the future, people are going to take advantage of you...”

“Oh?” Jiang Chen shrugged. He didn’t care too much about the three energy unit difference.

“Although ten energy units is worth a can of food. It also depends on what kind it is. The majority of canned food contain mutant fish meat, or a lot of them are also filled with sand. Which are the best case scenarios. Some of the canned foods even include human meat...”

The voice was full of despair and numbness. Jiang Chen had difficulty breathing; he was out of words.

“Curry chicken, fried pork... This is the first time I have ever had these delicacies in my life.” Sun Jiao looked at Jiang Chen full of awe. “Merchants use mutant cows to transport goods. I had the pleasure of having a meal with the beef from the mutant cows. Even the dry taste made me extremely satisfied.”

“I trust you,” Jiang Chen voice was quiet.

He felt a sudden fear overwhelm him. To Sun Jiao, he was

powerless. If she desired his food, it would only take a blink of an eye to finish him.

Trust? Jiang Chen felt a deafening fear overwhelm him. He almost wanted to grab the gold, travel back to the modern world, and forget everything that happened here. With the gold bars, he could live like a millionaire.

He only realized now that this world was more complicated than he thought.

Maybe it was because of greed, or because of a strong sense of arrogance. After a hard internal battle in his head, he calmed down and resisted the temptation to flee.

His face was emotionless as he tried to disguise his fear.

“Trust?” Sun Jiao laughed. However, within her eyes, there was a flicker of emotions that she couldn’t hide. This distant word had long been extinct in this landscape; long buried by starvation and death. Although Jiang Chen said this valuable word to her, Sun Jiao unconsciously reacted with a disdainful look.

With a sigh, Sun Jiao walked into the kitchen.

“Your naïveness is becoming very worrisome. However, I am not bothered by it.”

“...” Jiang Chen was more relaxed as he heard her words. This

time he made the right bet, Sun Jiao had no ill-intentions.

Otherwise, she would have had plenty of time to kill him and wouldn't have waited this long. Jiang Chen finally felt relieved, from this thought that has been bothering him for the longest time.

As Sun Jiao was about to reach the door, she turned around. "Since you are my employer, not only do I need to ensure your safety, I have the responsibility of preventing you from being tricked. If someone is after your wealth, that is also a problem for me. If you ever trade in the future, you should bring me."

[She cares?]

"Don't look at me like that! You are giving me goosebumps." Sun Jiao fled frantically from Jiang Chen's sight. She ducked into the kitchen, and screamed in shock, "what! How is this possible? A fridge!"

Deception, and stories, the majority of Jiang Chen's responses were lies. It was to avoid the imminent trouble and danger.

But the glimpse of emotion from her eyes was real.

At that one glimpse, to his surprise, the bold girl was not so annoying. She was ... cute?

"Stop eating canned food; tonight let's eat a fresh meal! For



celebrating my first employee.” Jiang Chen laughed and dashed into the kitchen, filled with an overwhelming amount of joy.

Sun Jiao was stunned in front of the fridge, as she did not bother to dispute her employee status. She stared at the tomatoes and eggs in the refrigerator.

Jiang Chen put these fresh ingredients in before Sun Jiao came back.

“You...” Sun Jiao turned her head around slow, with a dumbfounded voice.

“Don’t ask. I know you have a lot of questions. We can discuss this while we eat dinner. Now, do you know how to cut tomatoes?”

Jiang Chen left the dazed Sun Jiao in place, as a proud smile stretched across his face.

He took out a couple of tomatoes and eggs. “Tonight, we will make tomato fried eggs!”

# Chapter 5: Tomato Fried Eggs

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The reason why he chose to cook this dish was because of his limited cooking ability. Hence, this was the only dish he was good at, since he cooked the same thing every day.

[Once I have money, maybe I should hire a maid? ] Jiang Chen thought, before he got rid of the idea immediately. His secret would cause too much hysteria. Therefore, a maid would be inconvenient in hiding the truth.

A girlfriend would be his priority.

He thought about the gold bars in the living room, as a mischievous and happy smile appeared on his face.

Sun Jiao's mind was full of questions she wanted to ask. But instead, she stared at the steaming tomatoes and sniffed the delicious fragrance-she couldn't remember how many times she had done so already.

Jiang Chen already said that her questions would be answered at the dinner table. She was in no rush to know now. She cut the tomatoes silently, but uncontrollably glanced at Jiang Chen who was mixing the egg. His faint but happy smile made her heart beat a little faster.

“Lightly... It looks like you are going to chop through the cutting board as well...”

“Ah, oh.” Jiang Chen’s voice made Sun Jiao instantly look back at the chopping board. When she realized her irregular action, she felt a mixture of rage and embarrassment. But behind those emotions, a little bit of happiness was there as well.

[Happiness? What a distant word.]

She almost had to trace back to her time in the survival base.

Sun Jiao faintly remembered when she was young, the survival base’s door was still locked and it was almost like heaven in there.

No crimes, no class structure, and a society governed by Artificial Intelligence. Everyone equally shared the work and resources, and there was no conflict of interest. Everyone was kind and happy. Although people occasionally longed for the blue sky, nobody questioned their happiness. Compared to the wasteland, survival base 071 was heaven.

At the time, both of her parents were still alive. She had an adorable sister that was only one year younger. After the end of the lockdown period at the survival base, they both witnessed the first ray of the sunshine that shone through the cold steel door.

Then they lost each other.

She later learned that a lot of bandits picked poorly defended and newly opened survival bases as raid targets. They used the

remaining conscience of those people and looted their survival supplies and population. It was at the raid, that she lost her family.

After that incident, she destroyed any remaining conscience she had, and became a qualified “wasteland survivor”.

But for some strange reason, her frozen emotions melted a little now.

[Family?]

Sun Jiao had an illusion that she was home. She soon realized what she was thinking and her face turned red.

These past two days were the most emotional she had been in the last few years. With a bitter smile on her face, she shook her head. She then placed the sliced tomatoes into a bowl.

To suppress her emotions, she only had to take a deep breath. However, the feeling that touched the softest part of her heart could no longer be hidden.

Even Sun Jiao, herself, didn't realize that the man standing beside her became a bit more important in her heart.

As he watched Sun Jiao devour the dish, Jiao Chen laughed at the thought. This was the first time he saw someone eat this dish with that amount of excitement.

“I know you have a lot of questions. For example, why do I have so much food.” Jiang Chen put down his bowl and looked at Sun Jiao quietly.

“I can’t explain how I feel.” Sun Jiao also stopped eating as she gazed into Jiang Chen’s eyes. With a puzzled voice, she replied, “you gave me a feeling that ... it’s almost like you are from a fairytale.”

“Psh, a fairytale?” Jiang Chen was astonished.

“It’s from the books published before the war. In the survival base, we called them fairytales.” Sun Jiao sighed as she continued to mock herself, “everyone lived in harmony, with families, friends, and even lovers. Regardless of what you think, it must be a fairytale. Like the first time sunlight shone on me, when I was seven years old.”

Jiang Chen was silent. He walked to the fridge and grabbed a few cans of beer. He turned around and gave her an assuring smile. “Where I am from, when people feel tired and lost, they have a drink.”

Sun Jiao chugged the beer as her throat let out a satisfied noise.

“Grrr. This does not taste as good as Coke.”

“Nevertheless, it is a good way to let out your emotions. Which is

a good thing at the end of the day.” Jiang Chen also took a long sip of his beer. How many times did he drink alone? It wasn’t until after graduation did Jiang Chen start to enjoy the feeling of tipsiness. He ventured into an unknown city, worked at an unknown company, and was burdened with the stress of work and life after he was fired.

The cruel reality shattered the porcelain tower in his dream.

When he received his notice of termination, he felt the world collapse around him.

At least here, there was someone that drink with him. This apocalyptic world is not as bad as he imagined.

They chatted as if they have been best friends for years. With hands crossed, their distance got closer, and so did their heart.

## Chapter 6: Roshan

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The gray concrete road, filled with cracks, stretched towards the horizon. The unknown looking plants vigilantly sprouted through the cracks on the concrete, as it bathed in the unhealthy looking ray of sunshine.

The buildings in the vicinity had no closed windows. They were all shattered in the nuclear explosion. Some of the abandoned cars occupying the streets had windshields that were cracked but remained intact. They were made with higher quality glass than the windows.

It was also possible to spot the occasional sleek looking “metal box.” Sun Jiao explained that NATO’s paratrooper previously used them as shock absorbers. However, as she talked about the city’s history of invasions, she didn’t express too much emotion. It probably had to do with the fact that she was raised in the survival base and the concept of patriotism was non-existent.

But when she mentioned the history of wars, she openly expressed her disdain. Her eyes showed that both sides, in the war, were complete dumba\*ses.

“Is it going to rain?” Jiang Chen raised his head as he gazed into the sky. The thick gray clouds covered the sun, as if it was the clouds that made the sunshine looked so unnatural. There was a suppressing yellow light mixed with the ray of sunshine. He was curious as to how the plants grew here.

“Those are not clouds. Those are radiation dust.” Sun Jiao found the comment quite funny. He was almost as naïve as she was when she left survival base 071.

“That means we are completely exposed to radiation?” His only understanding of radiation was from the Fukushima nuclear reactor accident. He remembered, at the time, all the salt was purchased clean from the stores.

Although it's absurd looking back now, it was easy to imagine the emphasis people placed on health in the modern world. Radiation was as fearful as it could get.

Sun Jiao wasn't too fazed. “Don't worry, as long as there's iodine in your EP, the radiation level will not surpass the limit. You also don't need to worry about growing a third hand. However, if you are in front of a nuclear reactor or a former government's parliament, where radiation is high, it would be wiser to wear a protective suit,” Sun Jiao warned as she rolled her eyes again.

Although they had an exciting night, there was no sign of Sun Jiao being fatigued. But Jiang Chen felt a bit drained from all the action.

It was not to say that Jiang Chen was weak, regardless how much endurance he had. There was no way he could compare physically to a female Superman that constantly fought in battles.

[Those ridiculous body stats...]



Jiang Chen could not imagine that, without any signs of muscle, she was much stronger than him who at least maintained some muscles.

The decision to venture out together was completely HER idea.

“Since you said you are going to help me, then you have to study some combat related knowledge. Tomorrow let’s venture out together. At least you need to learn how to shoot, and how to protect yourself.”

“Hmm, well, I do think I can be a backup personnel.”

“Be quiet... tomorrow we’ll go to the survival camp at Sixth Street. You need to inject the anti-infectious vaccine. Without it, it would be too dangerous. You have to go.”

Therefore, Jiang Chen had to carry the rifle as he quietly followed.

They continued to chat along the way, but for some reason, she didn’t ask about his origin. Since she didn’t ask, Jiang Chen did not bring up the topic either. Jiang Chen knew that she stopped asking because she developed trust in him. When the time comes, she knew he would tell her.

For the same reason, Jiang Chen didn’t pursue the topic of why she was at the mansion in the first place.

“We’ll pass a zombie infested area up front. The best place to practice shooting is the battlefield itself. Get familiar with the weapon first, but don’t fire, “ she explained, as she took out a high-powered looking rifle from behind. She then looked at Jiang Chen, as she continued to answer his questions.

“SK10, short-to-medium range laser rifle. The best kind of weapon against zombies would be lasers because it has low noise and high accuracy. However, to improve your shooting, let’s start with bullet weapons first,” She pointed at the gun Jiang Chen was holding and continued.

“PK200 assault rifle. 7.62 mm in diameter. These bullet guns are not as accurate as the laser ones, but the high penetration power and reliability cannot be underestimated. Even if you use the barrel to smash your enemies, it would be durable enough to get the job done. The safe is on the right side of the rifle, remember to keep it closed if you are not firing.”

The sleek looking gun barrel had a futuristic design. At the handle, Jiang Chen saw a small symbol.

PAC.

The two of them walked through the empty street. The occasional three feet long rat crossing the road would always scare Jiang Chen, but he got used to it after a while. These mutants were everywhere. Jiang Chen even saw a cockroach the size of a dog as it fled into the shadows of the street. Their one-meter long tentacles were disturbing to see.

“Not all creatures possess attacking abilities. For example, while rats are large, biologically they still preserved their natural fear of human. While cockroaches certainly look frightening, due to the source of their food, they won’t attack any living things.” They were approaching the intersection as Sun Jiao raised her rifle in caution. “Zombies would stop all activity during the day time. The mutated cells in the back of their heads require a stable environment to photosynthesis. Shocking right? That’s why these zombies survived all these years without starving to death. I think some of the zombies even evolved to a point where they can reproduce asexually.”

Sun Jiao joked around for a bit while keeping her guard up. “What we need to be careful of are the carnivores. They usually eat zombies or other creatures at the bottom of the food chain. However, if they do encounter a human, they are not picky eaters. Lastly, the most dangerous species are humans. If someone points at your head, don’t hesitate and fire immediately.”

Her decisiveness made Jiang Chen feel a sudden coldness run down his spine.

Astounded by the cruelty on the wasteland, Jiang Chen was also amazed. The city developed its own complex yet distinct ecosystem. Nature was truly compelling in adapting to the idea of survival of the fittest.

Under the iron forests, there were no signs of civilization. Only an uncivilized land remained. Despite holding a highly advanced weapon, Jiang Chen did not feel safe at all.

“Shh.” Sun Jiao suddenly stopped and raised her right hand to stop Jiang Chen.

“Don’t point your gun at me, dumba\*s. Watch my back,” Sun Jiao cursed at Jiang Chen under her voice.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath and opened the safe, as he pointed the gun directly into the peaceful street.

“This is odd, all the mutants in the surrounding area disappeared. They must have sensed their predator.” There was a shiver of nervousness in Sun Jiao’s voice. The hint of nervousness made the almost calm Jiang Chen nervous again.

“Predator?”

“Carnivores of some sort. Hopefully, it is not a Death Claw.”

Although he didn’t know what a Death Claw was, Jiang Chen heard the concern in her voice.

At that moment, a loud blast came from somewhere far down the street. Immediately, a deep but loud roar followed and a burst of gunshots ensued.

“There is a battle up front, come with me.” Sun Jiao instructed after she heard the noise in the distance. Without retreating, she

moved in the direction of the battle.

“I mean, are you sure we are not going the wrong way?”

Sun Jiao didn't respond to Jiang Chen's question; he had to follow as he had no other choice.

A burst of howls erupted from a hideous yet vicious looking face. Saliva was flowing from its mouth, while it swung the almost broken lamp post. The fat on the creature's body looked as if it was about to burst.

“Focus fire. Throw the explosives over! Quick!”

“Ammo! I need ammo!”

“Ahhh, my hand!” A flying car door cut through a poor guy's arm, as it penetrated into the wall not far behind from him.

The monster was angered, as it unleashed all of its power onto the soldier's defense line.

The mutant was under heavy fire from the not so well equipped soldiers. They tried to suppress the raging meatball. A few soldiers ducked under friendly fire while avoiding the debris that the monster throw. They continued to throw explosives at the monster.

“... It's Roshan!” As Sun Jiao backed into the corner, shock was written all over her face. “How did it appear here...”

Jiang Chen was even more surprised. With his mouth wide open, he was completely stunned.

[What the hell is that? That thing is massive!]

Roshan pressed forward, as it bathed in the heavy fire. The situation was looking dire for the soldiers. While the bullets did affect Roshan's movement, it was far from stopping him. The thick layer of fat was like a bulletproof vest, which stopped the bullets from penetrating through his skin.

The soldiers were out of solutions. Even the leader of the squad immediately sent out an order to approach the Roshan with explosives. However, the thick layer of fat was designed for more than bullet protection.

Although the waves of attack were not effective, the Roshan's movement was hindered by it. The Roshan could no longer make any advancements forward.

At that moment, a homing missile penetrated the air, as it cast a gloomy trial of death directly at the Roshan.

But the missile did not hit the Roshan. It skidded across the Roshan's face, as it impacted the building behind it.

Boom! Following the impact, a wave of the violent explosions ensued. The steel reinforced concrete broke into pieces as it left a massive hole in the building behind the Roshan.

It seemed to have sensed the danger, the Roshan's body of fat began shaking violently, as its power was even more explosive and fierce. Its bloody mouth opened wide, as if it was letting out an angry roar, but the roar was silent.

Another missile flew across the battlefield. Following the track of the first missile, this one directly penetrated into the Roshan's bloody mouth.

In seconds, blood, brain, and fat exploded into small droplets. The content of the Roshan's body filled the street.

The Roshan, without its head, fell to the ground. The soldiers celebrated their victory.

Soldiers walked out of their covers as the battle came to an end. They hugged each other and helped the wounded. Then, they cleaned the battlefield in an organized manner.

“99-Type Anti-tank Missile, that is pretty much the only thing that could destroy the Roshan. The Roshan's fat is very thick, which would make any bullet type weapon obsolete. At the same time, the Roshan's bad habit of throwing things makes fighting one a nightmare.” Sun Jiao felt relieved as she let out a sigh.

“What are they doing?” Jiang Chen glanced at the people who were dissecting Roshan as he tried to keep the food in his stomach down.

“Collecting the crystals. Also, Roshan’s fat can be used as nutrients in the nutrient supply. Oh, I think the blood cell can also be used as ingredients in the vaccines.”

Nutrient supply? Why does it sound like food?

Jiang Chen shivered as he promised himself that he would never touch that nutrient supply. Wouldn’t that be equivalent to eating Roshan’s meat?

Sun Jiao smiled as she seemed to have guessed why Jiang Chen was grossed out. She then took Jiang Chen to the group of soldiers.

Sensing their approach, a soldier walked over. He then examined the group of two.

With professionalism, he spoke, “Sixth Street welcomes you. Based on the necessary procedure, I need to inspect your gene code.”

Gene code was a type of code based on an algorithm developed through a person’s genetic sequence, and was used as EP’s user ID. Due to EP’s broad adoption, and the uniqueness of each genetic sequence, it was used as a form of ID. In the apocalyptic world, the government didn’t exist. Therefore, to prove one’s identity, DNA



was the only option.

In some governed survival bases, the entrance was dependent on the inspection of the gene code. The goal was to find criminals who violated the law in the survival base.

After they had displayed their EP, the soldier allowed both of them to pass politely.

“I always thought only barbarians existed in the wasteland. I can’t believe I can see some traces of civilization.” Jiang Chen’s cautious heart calmed down as he saw the soldiers did not bother them any further.

Sun Jiao grinned as she heard Jiang Chen’s statement.

“Oh, my opinion is the opposite of yours. I think civilization exists everywhere on this piece of land. It’s just that its form is rather unique.”

The steel gate slowly opened, as the tension within the camp decreased. Behind the sandbags, Jiang Chen saw the Anti-tank Missile that destroyed Roshan. The vicious cannon spread an eerie vibe as it just stood there. The ground was littered with its large metal shells.

Jiang Chen followed Sun Jiao into the camp.

Sixth Street was a harbor that welcomed travelers of the

wasteland. Its philosophy was to protect the order in a land filled with chaos. But it would be naïve to consider Sixth Street as the enforcer of justice.

# Chapter 7: The Sixth Street

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Civilization transcended through time, as history unfolded the successes and failures of a species. Humanity was a product of human adaptation and increased the understanding of humans themselves. Civilization hence existed as the cultivation of all the spiritual, intellectual, and physical discoveries of humankind. It has no accurate definition and can exist in any form.

Therefore, civilization existed at this place. But the definition was different than what Jiang Chen believed.

The technological level at Sixth Street was all over the place. A soldier carried an old automatic rifle with a cigar in the other hand and stared blankly into space. While a merchant, with an advanced full-sensory computer, calculated the price of goods. People with missing limbs were everywhere. Some used canes while others were geared with robotic arms that were agiler than a real leg.

The lives of the Sixth Street residents were also drastically different.

People starved to the bones crowded the streets. They no longer even have the energy to howl. Uniformed soldiers, in groups of three, overlooked the road. They ignored the starved refugees and hookers on the street.

Like machines, the dark shades disguised any emotions they had.

“Absolute neutrality. That is Sixth Street’s founding principle on

this wasteland. The laws are rather simple here. Murder and theft will be punished by death, tax fraud will be punished by eviction, and intentional harm will result in jail time,” Sun Jiao explained to Jiang Chen as he tried to get familiar with the rules.

“Then, why is that guy not shot?” Jiang Chen swallowed his spit as he stared in disbelief. A man was beating a woman to death. The starved woman did not fight back. The man sensed Jiang Chen stare and gave Jiang Chen a friendly smile.

“That’s the inspector. They are responsible for cleaning up the corpses at the ghetto,” Sun Jiao answered with ease, but Jiang Chen could sense her dislike for this place.

That woman was clearly alive.

“The inner circle at the Sixth Street is a bit more organized, but it’ll cost us one crystal energy. We are here for some small exchanges, so the outside market should be more than sufficient,” Sun Jiao said avoiding the previous topic.

“...” Jiang Chen nodded in silence.

It was a twisted civilization.

The outside market was littered with filth, but it was much better than the ghetto. The thief that got shot today was thrown into the dump. At night, the inspector would drag the body into the farm. It would then get mixed in with the lard that they looted

from the Roshan and get made into fertilizers.

Some of the more famous, grand thieves, were nailed directly to the wall.

“Roger Clarkson, known as the werewolf, perpetrated three murders at Sixth Street and was shot by the security team in the sewage.”

A close examination of the wall explained the death of the criminals.

The name suggested that the guy was a foreigner, but it was nothing surprising since NATO's troops had previously landed in this city. A lot of people remained here.

At the front of the market, two rather clean looking merchants were arguing fiercely. They seemed to have reached a conclusion in the end, as they signed both their names. Under the supervision of the market regulator, one side put a piece of crystal onto the crystal counting machine. The other one leashed out ten barely clothed women.

Indeed, they were on leashes.

Every woman's slim and pale body was chained with a collar shaped electronic lock. Their spirits seemed to have escaped their bodies as they blindly obeyed the order.

Their graceful figures were stunning to the human eye. They were like dolls with almost flawless skin, but a barcode tattooed on their cheeks ruined the perfect image. It's a symbol that typically appeared on products only.

The merchant was satisfied by the “products” he had just purchased. He waved his hand as the women were loaded onto the truck, that was leaving the market.

“New Ray Hotel,” with her eyes fixed in the direction the vehicle, Sun Jiao slowly let those words out of her mouth.

Jiang Chen noticed that Sun Jiao’s hands clutched into fists.

“Hotel?”

“It’s a brothel. The goal of it is to provide full services to all customers. I think you understand exactly what kind of services they provide. At that place, female labors are expendable, since people with weird fetishes exist everywhere. I heard once from a not-so-smart guy, who was bragging at a bar in Liuding Town, how soft the girls were. Soft, as in an edible way.”

Jiang Chen shivered, as if he could almost imagine the hell those spiritless women go through.

“That slave merchant is probably from the force that occupied survival base 101. They use cloning technology and nutrient supply to provide low-cost clones. The people cloned are more like

products than they are human.”

“So, what exactly is a survival base?” Jiang Chen looked at Sun Jiao’s emotionless eyes as he opened his mouth in disbelief.

“It’s something rather peculiar. Each survival base had a unique design philosophy to increase its survival probability,” she shrugged as she continued to explain, “I was born in survival base 71. Now that I think about it, I was quite fortunate. The design philosophy was to use A.I. to govern human nature. Although my life was structured, at least I was happy. Some of the survival bases were not as lucky.” A cruel smile, unfit for her age, appeared on her charming face.

“I heard before that one survival base was designed to use people to govern people. It aimed to create a spiritual leader that motivates people’s desire to survive. It was clear how naïve the designer was. The “spiritual leader” only enforced justice for a few years before he neglected all human consciousness and became a barbaric tribe leader. He used the security measure in the place to eliminate all males and left all the women as his sex slaves. For survival base 101, I’d assume it was a human-less survival base.”

Shocked by the harsh truth, Jiang Chen forced himself to remain calm. However, he didn’t completely understand Sun Jiao’s words.

“Human-less survival base? What is a survival base without survivors?”

“Hehe, it stored the DNA of the human race’s elites. After the

survival base reached its time limit, the breeding system automatically “manufactured” perfect bodies. It then used virtual reality to produce years of memories within a short amount of time. I don’t know what the designer considered, but they did not realize how popular these “people” would be after the war.” Sun Jiao’s words were full of mockery. Jiang Chen remained silent and continued to listen.

[Is this the end of civilization...]

“We are here.” Sun Jiao’s voice abruptly Jiang Chen’s thought as she dragged him into a store.

The store was Sixth Street market’s official purchasing station. It was responsible for evaluating the price of goods necessary for the survival camp and make purchases accordingly. Although canned food and batteries could all be used as currency in most survival bases, these trade rules were not applicable at the “prosperous” Sixth Street. Therefore, it was necessary for a credible organization to enforce a consistent currency. It also simplified the taxation process.

Crystals were the source of energy for high power equipment. It acted as a hard currency in any survival base. Its ease of access also made it match all of the characteristics of money.

Although it would be much more profitable to open his own store and sell canned food, the “wealthy” Jiang Chen chose the simpler option of selling it directly to the Sixth Street officials.



Sun Jiao did not stop him as she noticed he didn't want to stay here much longer.

“Items.” The mechanical voice echoed through the window.

Jiang Chen opened his backpack. He took out one of the items and placed on the table.

The trader let out a loud gasp.

Jiang Chen heard a shiver of disbelief from the tone. Then, he felt all eyes were on him, without any intention of hiding their greed or desire.

Uncontrollably, Jiang Chen looked at Sun Jiao with pleading eyes. Sun Jiao signaled Jiang Chen to remain calm. No one dared to break the rules here. At least before they leave Sixth Street, they are safe.

“Sir, do you have any more of this?” The tone had a mixture of respect.

Fresh, canned meat. Even the elites that lived within the inner circle only ate the meat of mutant cows, and force-sprouted vegetables. The trader almost questioned the sensor because the screen printed <Fresh cow meat. The expiration date is 127 days. The toxic substance is far below the consumption threshold. The food quality is – perfect!> Meat in itself was considered a luxury, but fresh beef was the ultimate luxury. These things are almost

extinct in the apocalyptic world. Finding an unmutated cow in the entire world was impossible! Even if there was one, it could only be in the far north where the radiation level was relatively low.

In Sixth Street or the entire wasteland, the majority of people had no access to healthy food. In most situations, the survivors chose nutrient supply as their primary source. Those were mostly composed of mutant protein and the taste was lackluster, as it was only a means for survival.

Out of everyone on the wasteland, only Jiang Chen was lavish enough to eat “healthy food” every meal.

What was even more absurd was that he complained about the taste of canned food being worse than fresh food.

“I have plenty of them.”

“Please come to the VIP room. There will be a designated trader at your service.” The trader smiled at Jiang Chen while he sped through the process. After a brief moment, a pretty-looking girl approached Jiang Chen.

“Sir, please follow me.” The female trader mischievously smiled at Jiang Chen as she led them towards the VIP room. The goal of the room was to protect the privacy of the customers. If someone displayed valuable goods in the grand hall, he would be dead immediately after he stepped out of Sixth Street.

As they pushed open the ancient wooden door, the fragrance of tea emerged from the carefully decorated room. A traditional wooden table was supplemented by real leather sofas. In the middle of the chamber was a set of burning incense. The antique porcelain tea set only added to the place's glorifying elegance. This VIP room was quite similar to the tea rooms in the modern world.

“Please come in, Sir.” The gorgeous female trader welcomed Jiang Chen. Her cleavage slightly exposed. Sun Jiao grinned at the scene.

The way the female trader looked at him made him feel slightly uncomfortable, almost as if she was going to eat him. However, Jiang Chen didn't give it much thought as he walked into the room.

As the female trader was about to enter the room and close the door, Sun Jiao slipped in.

The female trader glanced at Sun Jiao with slight anger, but she was met with a defiant stare.

The female trader saw the enormous pair of breasts Sun Jiao had and a look of defeat crossed her face. However, she still maintained a professional smile and closed the door behind her.

Jiang Chen had, clearly, no idea about the fierce exchange that happened within a few seconds.

All transactions over 100 crystals must be done in the VIP room for privacy purposes. At the same time, it was a strategy to establish relationships with the wealthy. It was no news that at Sixth Street, the VIP room also offered extra "intimate" services.

Professional female traders used the "extra" services to make tips, and Sixth Street exchange would gain favorable reviews from major clients. It was a win-win situation.

But since Miss Sun Jiao was there, the female trader's dream for a big tip was shattered.

After the cans had been evaluated, the transaction was cleared. Twenty cans of perfect quality meat. The exchange paid a hefty price of 50 crystals per can, because these cans far exceeded the necessity of being just food and was considered a luxury. Therefore, if the exchange auctioned these among the elites, the price would easily double. After all, these were as rare as it could be.

Because of this, Sun Jiao complained to Jiang Chen countless times. But Jiang Chen didn't seem to be bothered by that fact; he was quite satisfied.

How much was a can even worth? However, one crystal was enough to charge the multiverse bracelet by 10%. Therefore, he no longer needed to steal electricity.

There was no way to lose in the trade.

“Do you know what the VIP room is for?” Sun Jiao suddenly asked, as they stepped into the crowded street.

“Hmm? A place to exchange multiple items?” Jiang Chen paused for a split second, as he was confused by the question.

Sun Jiao suddenly laughed so hysterically that she needed to hold her stomach. “Of course you don’t know.”

“I don’t think this is funny.” Jiang Chen blankly stared at Sun Jiao.

Just as Sun Jiao finished having her fun, she whispered into Jiang Chen's ear with a smirk, “it’s a place where you receive intimate service.

The light breath tingled his sensations. He was used to Sun Jiao’s flirting, so he did not blush or run away like before. Instead, he enjoyed the feeling.

“Don’t you hate me for ruining your chance of having a great time?” Sun Jiao jokingly asked. “If I stood outside, maybe she would have given you the intimate service. That girl is probably still cursing at me for ruining her business.”

“Why would I hate you? I prefer to get intimate service from you.” Jiang Chen also had a mischievous smile on his face. He approached Sun Jiao’s ear and in retaliation, he also blew into it.

She blushed as she was new to the experience herself. Although she assumed her role as someone older than Jiang Chen, she was not.

Suddenly, Sun Jiao's eyes lit up in caution. "Someone is following us."

"Who?" Jiang Chen paused as he subconsciously wanted to turn his head.

"Don't turn your head. Pretend like nothing happened. Nobody dares to do anything here. I have my ways of dealing with them, my boss," Sun Jiao said as she bit Jiang Chen's ear. In other people's eyes, they were a loving couple.

Because someone was following them, they sped up their itinerary.

Sun Jiao took Jiang Chen to a hospital looking place. He learned that the place was for vaccines and genetic injections.

After a total of 55 crystals, the doctors injected the vaccine and genetic injections into Jiang Chen's arm. One of them was a T-type vaccine which prevented zombie infection. The other, was a C-type genetic injection. Based on the doctor's description, its effects included an increase in muscular strength, reflex, and bone strength between 10-25 points. The body's ability would increase gradually over three days.

There were some other useful injections in the store, and Jiang Chen selectively purchased a few. They were all beneficial in improving the body's performance and combat powers. After all, strength was necessary to protect the wealth; he couldn't hide behind Sun Jiao for his whole life.

However, Jiang Chen still thought it was much cooler to hire someone to fight for you than to fight yourself.

Immediately after, they replenished their ammunitions at the firearm store. Sun Jiao's assault rifle used the C-type battery as ammo, and five clips of ammo cost only one energy unit.

The PK200 rifle that Jiang Chen used, the 7.62mm ammo, were a bit more expensive. 360 rounds of ammo cost a total of 4 crystals. While Sun Jiao was uncertain about making the purchase, Jiang Chen paid the full price without hesitation.

Canned food for firearms, it was a win for him in any situation.

Of course, the uncivilized world would not understand this.

On the wasteland, laser weapons were without a doubt the most economical and effective weapon of choice. Most short-mid range laser rifles were sufficient in any terrain within the city. Only long range rifles cost a significant amount of energy. For Sun Jiao's rifle, its effective range was only 400 meters. After that, its power would decrease significantly. But one C-type battery was enough to provide 200 shots. If overheating was not a problem, its power could directly match that of a machine gun.

As to bullet weapons, its benefits included an effective firing distance and immunity against energy shields. For the PCA manufactured PK200 assault rifle, if the gun were equipped with a scope, it would be as effective as a sniper rifle. Although it was a bit of a waste for Jiang Chen to use it, it fitted his need. The reliability of bullet type weapons was much higher compared to laser rifles. An EMP grenade would render a laser rifle completely useless, but a bullet weapon would continue to function. If there were any malfunctions, Sun Jiao would know how to solve the problem, even though Jiang Chen would be clueless.

“Let’s stay here tonight.” Sun Jiao watched the searing sun make its exit into the horizon and subtly peeked at the follower.

“But.” Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows as he felt extremely unsafe about being followed.

“The night will disguise all the dangers,” Sun Jiao replied calmly with a fierce smile, “and it is also our opportunity to be the dangerous one.”



## Chapter 8: Huizhong Mercenaries

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The Tulip Hotel sat between the borders of the inner and outer circle. The location was near Sixth Street's most prosperous market, and it was the most secure and guarded place.

The roof cast a humid and dark vibe to onlookers. 50 anti-air machine guns guarded the lavishly furnished hotel, despite the rather odd contrast, it demonstrated the hotel's strong force. On the lawless piece of wasteland, safety was the number one priority.

Only backed by the Sixth Street official could anti-air machines be placed on the roof. Only the wealthy and important people lived here. Therefore, the issue of security was emphasized to the max. According to Sun Jiao, if any intruder entered your room without permission, the law permits the intruder to be shot on the spot.

The reason why they lived here was to get rid of the "tail" that followed them.

They sat on the extravagant leather sofa as Jiang Chen swallowed a piece of orange from a can of fruit. He would have never eaten these things before, due to the ridiculous amount of preservatives and sweeteners in it. However, since he only ate junk food for the past few days, he needed to ingest some fruit. For vitamins, and to maintain his health.

"Don't look at me like that; I'll save you some." Jiang Chen rolled his eyes as he saw Sun Jiao stare at the fruit, full of desire. He turned towards the person on the ground, who was also staring at

the fruit, swallowing. “Why don’t we get rid of this problem and have dinner?”

Hui Lei was completely tied up on the ground as he felt someone’s vicious stare behind him. A chill went down his back. He stared at the smiling man on the sofa but felt a sense of fear from the bottom of his heart.

Cold sweat appeared profusely on Hui Lei’s forehead as he felt the gun pointed to the back of his head, “I... I am... you guys got the wrong person! I, I didn’t...”

Sun Jiao whipped the gun barrel around and, without any hesitation, pointed it at his face. She then stepped on his head as she interrogated him in a dangerous tone. “I am not asking if you followed us, I am asking you...” she slowed down her voice as she flipped open the switch of the laser rifle, the light hum echoed across the room, “...who sent you here?”

That was the voice of a predator. Even Jiang Chen, who sat comfortably on the sofa, shivered. This was the first time she acted so viciously, well maybe not the first time. After Sun Jiao caught him, he immediately said he did not know anything. Other than a name, he didn’t give them any useful information. He insisted that he was a refugee who lived in the ghetto.

But would a refugee appear in the most prosperous place on Sixth Street?

“I don’t know anything! You guys are using illegal forces! The

guards at Sixth Street will not let you guys go!” Hu Lei screamed as his eyes opened wide. He was so naïve that he began to threaten Jiang Chen. Naïve, but dumb.

If he didn’t trust Sun Jiao’s abilities, Jiang Chen would almost believe he was just an ordinary person.

“You have ten seconds to reconsider. Of course, to help you think, I will break one of your nuts every ten seconds,” with a stern voice, Sun Jiao kicked Hu Lei as she flipped him over.

“Don’t do it! No!” Hu Lei let out a frightened scream as he looked hysterically at Sun Jiao and tried to move away from her.

“9.”

“I, I don’t know anything! Miss, please let me go,” Hu Lei begged with his life, but he could not see the slightest hesitation nor compassion in this devil like woman.

“7,” Sun Jiao immediately picked up a steel beam

“I, I...”

“1,1,” Sun Jiao raised her hand.

“Nooooo!”

“Wait a second.” Jiang Chen suddenly opened his mouth.

Sun Jiao paused with the steel beam still in mid-air.

A filthy smell began to fill the room. Jiang Chen sniffed the air and looked at the twitching Hu Lei with disgust. They didn't even start, and he had already peed his pants. If he wanted to be brave, he at least needed not to pee himself. Although when Sun Jiao said she was going to break his nuts, Jiang Chen also felt a chill seep down his pants. This move was surprisingly effective against males.

“I don't like to use violence to solve problems.” Jiang Chen smiled at Hu Lei.

As if he saw an oasis in the middle of the desert, Hu Lei crawled in front of Jiang Chen and firmly kneeled in front of him.

“Thank you! I, I ....”

“But if you continue to pretend like this, I don't mind giving my assistant some advice. Like putting a hungry mutant dog right in front of your nuts. I am sure it would enjoy a delicious meal.”

Jiang Chen's cold words froze the smile that just appeared on Hu Lei's face and immediately collapsed into a look of despair.

Jiang Chen also shook both of his legs as he finished the sentence. The idea also made his nuts hurt. Jiang Chen swore in

his head, but his face was still expressionless.

“Of course, compared to violence, I prefer doing deals. I am a merchant by nature, and if you are willing to cooperate, this is yours.”

A soft glowing purple crystal appeared in front of Hu Lei. The eyes full of terror slowly turned into greed.

A crystal worth 100 energy unit, it was no doubt a significant amount of money on the wasteland.

“Of course, you could lie to me with some elaborative story, but if I were you, I would not do that. Would your boss give you this much money? I can, if you promise to work for me.” Jiang Chen was pleased to see Hu Lei’s facial expression change. He knew the good cop bad cop strategy worked.

The rest of the problems were simple, Jiang Chen easily got the information he needed from his mouth.

Huizhong Mercenaries, a group of mercenary, was known for human tracking and raiding survivors. They also provide the occasional protective service for special groups of customers. The mercenary was located at a school in Song Jiang city. It used the walls there to build a strong defense. The reason they spotted Jiang Chen was merely a coincidence. Huizhong Mercenaries were just finishing a trade on Sixth Street when the leader, Zhou Guoping, saw Jiang Chen taking out a can of food from his backpack. Jiang Chen was then immediately invited to the VIP

room which triggered Zhou Guoping's interest.

Of course, to be the leader of a trade team, Zhou Guoping had the brains to strategize and plan. Obviously, kidnapping on Sixth Street was impossible. If he broke the rules here, the dead bodies outside of the market were clear indications of the consequences he would face. Huizhong mercenaries also needed Sixth Street to trade for necessities. No one dared to make enemies with Sixth Street.

But if they kidnapped outside of Sixth Street, there would be no problems. The rules only applied when they were within the walls of the Sixth Street.

Zhou Guoping's head was filled with greed as he saw Jiang Chen's full backpack, but he still moved carefully. He knew that many forces traded on Sixth Street. If he messed with the wrong group of people, even his commander would not be able to save him. Zhou Guoping did not intend to kidnap them, as he only sent people to follow them. He sent one person to keep an eye on them, and another to find out more about their backgrounds.

After he had seen Jiang Chen enter the vaccine store, and then immediately went to the ammo store, Zhou Guoping was full of surprise and joy. He believed that both of them were lone travelers on the wasteland because most of the powerful forces would not exchange crystals with ammo. They usually possessed their own production line.

Take Sixth Street, for example; the enormous ghetto is not meant to be a safe heaven. Immediately beside the ghetto was a massive

factory. The factory contained all kinds of production lines extracted from all over the wasteland. Some of them are even improved to utilize the highly efficient crystals. They melted old metals into ammo, mixed mutant proteins with fat to create nutrient supply, and farmed vegetables and fruits with special fertilizers. To continuously survive on the wasteland, production was a necessity. The officials of Sixth Street knew that by heart.

This was even more critical especially given all the stores of Wang Hai city were raided clean more than ten years ago.

As he confirmed that they were lone travelers, Zhou Guoping immediately contacted the headquarters of the mercenary group and tightened the watch on the two. These two were more wealthy than any group he has ever raided. Although the woman made Zhou Guoping felt a slight danger, Zhou Guoping was determined to strike the “gold.”

Jiang Chen silently listened to Hu Lei’s confession as he began to ponder.

“Ha, haha, boss. Don’t you think you should give me that crystal now?” Hu Lei smiled, but his eyes were fixed on the crystal, full of greed.

100 energy worth of crystal! He would be set for life.

One energy unit was good enough to buy ten nutrient supply. Oh, why would Hu Lei even need nutrient supply? Even if he went to the most expensive place on wasteland, New Ray Hotel, it would be

enough for a month! Hu Lei could not contain his excitement, even though the crystal was still in Jiang Chen's hands.

[Since this man still needs me, I will not die. He will probably even give me more crystals in the future.] Hu Lei fantasized about his future life. He imagined lying around while being served by a hot blonde maid.

A black pistol shattered his fantasy, as his eyes met with the pitch black barrel.

“Dumb\*ss.” Jiang Chen sighed as he pulled the trigger.

Bang! Blood splattered everywhere, with some white liquids mixed in between. He looked at the smoke coming from the pistol, his hand trembled. Although he was mentally prepared, and the guy was deserving of his death due to all the crimes he committed, seeing the head split open was still traumatizing.

Hu Lei kept his mouth closed before was not because he feared the Huizhong Mercenaries' influence. For if he wanted to hide, it would be impossible to find him. Even for a dominant force like Sixth Street, it would still be difficult to trace a wanted person. So, if he managed to leave the area, he would not need to worry about his safety. However, he kept his silence because of how worthless a human life could be. He was worried that the second he let any information out, he would be executed. However, the combination of extreme fear and an incredible offer from Jiang Chen, turned Hu Lei into a stranded traveler who saw an oasis in the middle of a desert. Thus, he spilled everything.



Hu Lei was too naïve to believe that he could form an agreement with Jiang Chen. He thought he could be a double agent in the Huizhong Mercenaries. However, loyalty was a joke to him because true loyalty never existed on a wasteland where the ultimate goal was to survive.

As predicted, his plan ultimately came short. The moment he finished his sentence, his value was completely gone.

Therefore, it was a wise decision to execute the spy immediately. Jiang Chen was not worried that he would be found.

Blood also splattered onto Sun Jiao. She was slighted disgusted but was used to such gruesome scenes. She shrugged. “It’s difficult to wash blood stains off of clothing. Also, next time, you can leave these types of things to me.”

The hint of care, hidden in her last sentence, touched Jiang Chen's heart dearly.

He took a deep breath to calm his conscience. He then closed the safety and tossed the gun away.

“I will get used to it.”

A smile broke out on Sun Jiao’s face as she approached Jiang Chen. She sat on Jiang Chen’s leg and hugged him. The bold move slightly surprised Jiang Chen. The softest part of Sun Jiao took

away any doubt he had.

“You are going to stay, right?” She whispered into his ear, with her red lips.

“You know..?” He asked in a concerned but rhetoric tone. He hugged her gorgeous body. It was Jiang Chen’s biggest secret, and a secret he could never tell.

“Girls are very sensitive,” she replied with a grin in her voice. “You don’t belong here, but I hope you don’t leave me.”

“I will never,” Jiang Chen said in a soft, but determined voice.

He had already made a choice that night.

Yes, he initially wanted to take the gold from this place and live like a millionaire in the modern world. But now, he could no longer separate himself from this world.

There was someone he cared about. Therefore, it was impossible to leave. If in the future, there was a way, maybe he could time travel with Sun Jiao into the modern world. The wasteland wasn’t exactly the best place to stay.

“I also believe you.” This sentence came from the bottom of his heart.

“If this place didn’t smell like blood, I would “eat” you right here.” Emotion and joy overcame Jiang Chen as he whispered into Sun Jiao’s ear.

“But, I want to take a shower first.”

“I don’t want to let go.” Jiang Chen smacked her butt and grinned as he listened to the soft moans by his ear.

“Then you’ll have to take a shower with me.” Sun Jiao playfully bit onto Jiang Chen’s ear. Her long and agile legs held onto him tightly. In a seductive voice, she said, “let me see if the gene vaccine made you any stronger.”

A roar and a scream ensued. Shirts, pants, and underwear scattered across the floor... There was a battle between man and woman in the washroom.

“It looks like the gene vaccine was effective after all. My feet didn’t even touch the ground.” After a while, Sun Jiao collected her breath as she finished enjoying herself. She poked at Jiang Chen’s chest with a grin.

His once flat chest now had muscles. But since the gene vaccine only increased muscle strength and not the appearance of muscles, Jiang Chen’s body didn’t look too different from before. Though his strength, was now far more superior.

“Satisfied, my princess?” Jiang Chen lightly embraced the

delicate figure. With a smile, he wanted to slap her butt again.

“Call me your queen,” Sun Jiao said. She playfully avoided Jiang Chen’s hand. She then covered her body with a towel. “It’s now time for business.”

“Time to eat dinner?” Jiang Chen said smiling as he also grabbed a towel.

“Of course, but before that, we need to take care the unfortunate guy that’s outside.”

He watched Sun Jiao leave the washroom with a forced smile. It was a bit too crazy to have sex with a dead body in the house.

[It looks like I need to learn how to control myself. Yes, more control]

# Chapter 9: The Plan

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Dead bodies were not a big deal on the wasteland. The place was not exactly the definition of a civilized society.

Sun Jiao used the intercom, beside the door, to call the servers and explained to them that she encountered an assassin. Moments later, a few servers came in and dragged the body away. Before they left, they were considerate enough to spray the carpet with blood dissolver, which cleaned up all the nasty blood stains. The manager also came personally to apologize for the intruder.

In the apocalyptic world, death was common and natural.

It appeared that this was also not the manager's first time taking care of an incident like this. He handled the situation seamlessly. Sun Jiao and Jiang Chen then politely rejected the offer of a complimentary steak dinner made of mutant cows. It was simply a gesture, since no one who could afford this place cared about a complimentary steak meal.

The suite didn't have a kitchen; it only had a microwave and a dusty rice cooker that sat at the corner of the dining room. Most of the rich who lived here did not prepare food themselves, but a few wealthy exceptions did prefer to eat luxurious food like rice.

In this world, rice was considered a luxury. Despite the existence of a few farmlands, rice production was still very limited. Therefore, most of the people who lived here survived on nutrient supply and only ate cooked food for special occasions.

But of course, Jiang Chen was an exception. He took out a bag of rice from the storage dimension and washed it before he put it into the rice cooker. In less than half an hour, the steaming rice was finished, and the smell immediately dazzled Sun Jiao.

Jiang Chen didn't hide his special ability in front of Sun Jiao anymore, and Sun Jiao didn't inquire further. Jiang Chen knew that she was curious, but is especially grateful that she respected his privacy. Jiang Chen knew that one day, he would tell her all his secrets. For he couldn't even understand some of the miracles himself, it would only cause more confusion if she knew.

After he poured the contents of the can onto a plate and heated it, the dishes were placed on the dinner table and a not-so-fancy dinner was prepared.

It was not fancy because Jiang Chen has had enough canned foods, but the dinner did include things like curry chicken, spicy tofu, and a lot of things Sun Jiao had never seen before. So, the dishes were still quickly swept clean.

Jiang Chen patted his flat stomach as he eyed the empty rice cooker. He was quite shocked to discover that the gene vaccine not only strengthened his muscle, but it also increased his appetite. He at least ate two times his usual amount. He finally understood why Sun Jiao ate so much; she was not just a foodie after all.

"I made a little more so we could have some for breakfast tomorrow, but it looks like you ended up finishing it all." Jiang

Chen laughed as he looked at Sun Jiao's happy face after the meal.

She blushed as she eyed Jiang Chen with an angry look. "What, are you worried?"

"No, I can afford it regardless of how much you eat," Jiang Chen said while shaking his head.

Although it was not exactly sweet talk, Sun Jiao looked euphoric, as a smile appeared on the "bold" girl's face.

"Help me clean up." Jiang Chen rolled his eyes as he grabbed the plates.

"Okay."

He stared at Sun Jiao's flat stomach in disbelief. He wondered where the five bowls of rice went.

"The commercial bank building at Qing Pu is located in a crowded area. The zombie concentration, as well as radiation, are all extremely high. Also ... dangerous mutant creatures will be there." She lied flat on the bed and pointed her finger at the full-sensory computer screen, as a three-dimensional map appeared.

"This is the map. If we need to get the gold from inside, we'll have to enter from here and then pass through the safety tunnel... Come on, are you even listening to me?" Sun Jiao shook her head and rolled her eyes.

“What is... this?” Jiang Chen wiped his drool and gazed at the advanced tech product.

The physical part was only the size of a pen, and a square prism projected out from the side displayed the screen. The three-dimensional visual hovered above the rectangular prism.

A product that only appeared in sci-fi films, now appeared right in front of his eyes. Jiang Chen couldn't believe what he was seeing. This thing was probably worth more than all the gold in Wanghai city.

It would be nearly impossible to sell these kinds of products. If Jiang Chen showed this product to anyone, a lot of government organizations would immediately find him and discuss with him about contributing to the country as a patriotic citizen.

“It's a full-sensory computer. Although it is not as reliable as a portable computer, the functionality is much more advanced. There has to be a limit to your lack of knowledge.” Sun Jiao rolled her eyes again.

“Fine, what is a dangerous mutant creature?” Jiang Chen sighed as he accepted the fact that he was oblivious. He lied beside Sun Jiao and continued to stare at the screen.

“For example, the Roshan we saw today, or this...” Sun Jiao's finger swiped across the screen. A figure that was similar to an alien appeared on the screen, “ ...Death Claw. Its energy level is



between 60-70. Its speed is extremely high and its sense of smell is very sensitive. The body is covered by a layer of protective armor, so normal bullets cannot deal real damage to it. Therefore, the best solution is to run away, but even that is difficult to do.”

A light aroma of lily tingled Jiang Chen’s nose. Because Sun Jiao used the shampoo and body wash from the modern world, Sun Jiao’s body casted an attractive fragrance.

However, since they were in the middle of a serious conversation, Jiang Chen managed to control himself.

As he recollected his thoughts, Jiang Chen stared at the Death Claw in deep thought.

“Do these things appear near the commercial banking building?”

“Death Claw will appear anywhere, but they usually prefer to be near places that have been impacted by a nuclear bomb. I am not exactly sure about this, but typically when there is a high distribution of zombies, there will be other mutant creatures in the vicinity. This is because zombies are considered food for the mutants.”

“... Do you have any plans?” Jiang Chen asked after a brief pause.

“Of course there are two options. First, we can use this route to infiltrate the underground vault directly and then use explosives to open it. Or second, we can use this way instead to enter the main

control room, obtain the access code, and then use the regular route to get into the vault.”

“Where did you get all this information? Are they reliable?” Jiang Chen was visibly shocked by the clearly labeled route.

“Liuding Town. They have the most accurate map databases there. Apparently they got it from the satellite before the war, so it should be trustworthy.”

“What exactly is this Liuding Town, I’ve always heard you talk about it.” After Sun Jiao’s explanation, Jiang Chen was curious.

“Bo Hai, it’s an aircraft carrier.” Sun Jiao continued with a grin, disregarding the shock on Jiang Chen’s face. “So, my boss, it’s time for you to make a choice.”

“The first plan is too dangerous, and the explosion would create too much noise. If it manages to attract all the zombies, then there is no way to get out.”

“That’s my concern as well. Although attracting all the zombies would be an exaggeration, it is not too far off.”

Even during the day, zombies still possess some attack power. If they receive any strong stimulants, they would attack.

“How about through infiltrating the network? Do you know how to hack?”

“How would I know those things?” Sun Jiao laughed. “To survive in the wasteland, great shooting ability is more than enough. However, there are quite a few specialists out there, and they often don’t live in the best conditions. It wouldn’t be too difficult to hire one.”

After a long period of consideration, Jiang Chen made a choice cautiously. “Then let’s go with option two... Where can we hire these people?”

“We can hire them here, from the ghetto at Sixth Street. All the people without combat power live there.” Sun Jiao pointed outwards as she turned off the computer. “Oh, we also don’t have to worry about the Huizhong Mercenaries. Although they are active in the Song Jiang area, we can kill their men here. Besides, killing them would be understandable, given you are a target for them anyways.”

“You are right. I have a feeling they are going to come after us when we leave the area, or at least continue to follow us.”

“Do you need me to prepare a bit?” Sun Jiao sighed as she stretched her graceful and slim arms.

“In that case, we can do this...”

After Sun Jiao had heard Jiang Chen’s plan, her eyes lit up.

“Wow, you are a more terrible human being than me! Why don’t you go to the labor market tomorrow then, it is at the front entrance of the ghetto. The commission fee is usually one crystal and they will let you pick until you are satisfied.”

“Ok, it’s better to work separately for now. Make sure you hide before leaving,” Jiang Chen warned.

“Understood.” Sun Jiao shrugged with the same careless expression. “I have plenty of enemies and a mercenary group is nothing to me. If it is not for the fact that I am worried about you, nobody could stop me from leaving.”

[I promise, if I want to leave, no one could stop me either.] Jiang Chen murmured in his head.

He turned off the bedside lamp and the light in the room changed into a soft orangey glow. It was very late into the night, and through the bulletproof window, there was not a single soul on the street.

“Oh, are you sleeping now?” Sun Jiao turned around with the blanket just covering her body. She grinned at Jiang Chen.

“You little devil... We have things to do tomorrow. Now sleep.”

He already fought a hard battle earlier with her. If it continued like this daily, Jiang Chen questioned if his body would be able to handle it.

# Chapter 10: The Ghetto Full of Talent

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“Hehe, Boss, are you satisfied with this one?”

The weather on the wasteland was known for its strangeness. Although it was the midst of a summer day, occasionally the temperature would drop to subzero like it was the end of fall. The thick radiation dust blocked the majority of the UV rays, which means fluctuations in the weather was quite normal. If the cloud-like radiation dust would not drift away, then the temperature would feel even colder.

Especially in the morning, the chillness was even more apparent.

Covered in a trench coat, Jiang Chen stuffed one hand into his pocket while he examined a resume with the other. The fat guy standing by him was already bald and almost old enough to be Jiang Chen’s dad, but he just stood obediently there, waiting for Jiang Chen’s order.

The survival camp was governed by absolute freedom and a capitalistic view; the crystals dictated who had power. Although he didn’t know Jiang Chen’s background, if he offended the customer by any means, his boss would not take this lightly on him.

Also, Jiang Chen was a man of status. He took the recommendation from Sun Jiao to create a fictitious position – which was the general manager of a company called Canned Fishbone. Other than the leaders of different factions and forces, the two other prestigious positions on the wasteland were arms

dealers and food producers.

Both types of products were very lucrative, especially because the majority of the farmlands were no longer feasible for production.

As to why the company was called Canned Fishbone, well it was convenient since the brand produced most of the canned food that Jiang Chen brought. He even considered, after receiving a sum of cash, he would buy that company out to save the trouble of erasing the production date.

“...Zhang Tianyu, originally the vice president of Walkman Electronic Company, specializes in business administration and electronic product development. The designer of the Asia famous Walkman P7 phone.” Jiang Chen cracked a smile. A vice president, that’s satirical. “Hmm, Mr. Wang Yi, I need people who specialize in computers and can do some labor work at the same time. However, you managed to find me a vice president?”

Although a stellar resume, he didn’t consider the vice president any further. He didn’t need a person who was capable of corporate strategy.

He didn’t know why, but it felt great rejecting a vice president. His face maintained emotionless on the surface.

“I am sorry Sir. If you could please excuse me for a moment.” The labor market manager named Wang Yi profusely apologized, as he ran into the data room to search again.

Jiang Chen looked at the poorly dressed refugees in the ghetto as he let out a long sigh.

The ghetto included some families with young people who could work. Usually, they would work in the factory area in exchange for some cheap nutrient supply and a small tablet of iodine. They would continue to survive with the family in hardships until death.

If they encountered any diseases, their background almost foretold their unfortunate fate.

Jiang Chen gazed at the radioactive dust cloud; the light that struck through cast an unhealthy color.

Immediately, the fat Wang Yi hustled out of the data room and gave a stack of resumes to Jiang Chen. He wiped the sweat from his forehead and smiled at Jiang Chen.

Most of the resumes were dusty. It was evident Wang Yi recently dusted them off. There was an overabundance of highly skilled tech individuals on the wasteland. After all, the production of bullets didn't require sophisticated technology. Also, nobody would bother purchasing a new computer or phone.

Jiang Chen carefully sifted through the resume as he raised his eyebrows occasionally.

“Boss, are you not satisfied?” Wang Yi asked anxiously, as this

affected his commission, which was his only source of income.

“There are a few people that are quite exceptional. However...” Jiang Chen pointed at the criminal record at the bottom of the resume, “...why are they all criminals?”

Lu Haitao, IT Specialist, was sentenced to 10 years in prison after stealing 15 nutrient supply. He was currently working at the nutrient supply boiler as a laborer.

Li Kaiming, Feixun Technology's Project Manager, was sentenced to 17 years in prison for robbery, and currently worked in an ammunition factory as a laborer.

Wang Yi's face was full of anguish as he said with a plea, “boss, there is nothing I can do about it.”

After Wang Yi explained, Jiang Chen eventually understood. Not everyone in the ghetto had freedom. All the people that were traded as a product were people that lost their freedom. Every person that received low-income support were the “property” of Sixth Street. They were similar to slaves in ancient times. Every capable individual was forced to work in a factory, and incapable people acted as population reserves who would serve as soldiers in the frontline. For those refugees that are given freedom, although most are poor, they can survive without any issues. Therefore, they do not need low-income support.

But those were the rules from ten years ago. The Wanghai city now had already established a stable “ecosystem,” and mutants



and zombies did not attack the remaining space of the survivors. Hence, Sixth Street was left with no external enemies. Therefore, there was no need for those slave like refugees.

To alleviate the overpopulation problem, the Sixth Street officials also had to participate in the human labor business. They provided connections for specific “suppliers” and used them to sell the excessive refugees. Mercenaries or merchants would often purchase the refugees as bait. It’s fair to say that those people often did not end up in the best places. No one wasted nutrient supplies.

Therefore, the individual permitted to be sold were either incapable people that offered no value or criminals.

Jiang Chen hesitated again because he didn’t want either type of people to join him.

A terrible character would be difficult to control, but someone who was weak-bodied would also be challenging.

“Boss, you don’t have to worry. These people will wear electronic bracelets once they are sold. Therefore if they do any harm...” Wang Yi saw the hesitation in Jiang Chen’s eyes and carefully explained it to him. In the end, he made a gunshot gesture.

Although he was still worried, there were no better solutions. Jiang Chen sighed again as he must make a decision from the group of criminals. He just needed to be careful, that’s all.

“010342, please stop or you will be shot immediately.” An emotionless voice echoed through the door as Jiang Chen looked in that direction.

A soft body tackled his leg and he paused a little before looking down.

“I am sorry that I overheard your conversation. I know computers. Please, buy me.” The girl spoke in a fast tone. The emotion cast by her pupil transitioned between fear and desperation.

As the tiny body grappled onto his leg, Jiang Chen cautiously touched the weapon on his back. However, after he saw the soldier signaling him not to overreact and point his gun at the girl, Jiang Chen immediately abandoned the idea of pulling out his gun.

The soldier grabbed the girl like he was grabbing a chicken. Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows but didn't say anything.

Although he sympathized with her, he was worried about the girl's intentions. What if it was a trap by the Huizhong Mercenaries?

“I am very sorry. There are always plenty of people that don't want to live to see tomorrow's daylight,” Wang Yi apologized profusely. He also motioned for the soldier to send the girl back to camp.

Jiang Chen noticed the girl had a watch like item on her wrist. The item was constantly flashing. If anyone who received low-income left the ghetto, it would immediately trigger the alarm.

“If she is sent back, what would happen to her?” Jiang Chen asked carelessly.

“Put into a work camp.” Wang Yi shrugged, as things like this happened every day.

“Even a kid that young can work?”

“She is not that young. Usually, only people above the age of 16 wear those bracelets. She is just a bit malnourished. Anyways, boss, who do you want to select ....”

“I’ll pick the girl.” Jiang Chen sighed as he made the decision. A girl that thin and weak would die almost immediately in the work camp. Jiang Chen saw a lot of dead bodies since he came to the wasteland, he even killed someone with his own hands. But he couldn’t let the girl be taken to a hell like place right in front of his own eyes, especially if he was the reason. Jiang Chen tried to convince himself.

[Maybe that was my conscience after all? ] Something rare, but valuable.

“Hmm?” Confused, Wang Yi paused before he approached Jiang Chen.

“Boss, if you are into those types, there are some better choices. I have some connections that could help you...”

“You seem to have a lot to say.”

Wang Yi looked at Jiang Chen’s cold and emotionless face, and a shiver went down his spine.

“Yes, Yes, No problem,” it was foolish to offend the customer as Wang Yi apologized again.

“How long would it take to finish the process?”

“Approximately one day. Please tell me your address.” Although the girl just violated the rule which made her a criminal, it would still take some procedures before she could be sold.

“Two crystal units, I’ll wait here.”

“Boss, there is a justice system.”

“Three crystal units. I am referring to just the tip,” Jiang Chen said without patience. Civilization doesn’t even exist here, and you are telling me about the justice system.

“Yes! I will take care of it for you immediately.” Wang Yi jogged to his office as he made the necessary contacts with his

“connections” quickly. Although the guy looked fat, he was quite efficient.

Jiang Chen only waited for half an hour before a soldier brought the girl to the door. He noticed that in just half an hour, there was already a bruise on the girl’s face.

Wang Yi saw Jiang Chen’s dark facial expression as he tried to comfort him. “Boss, the examination took some time, but that’s for your safety. Please understand,” he whispered into Jiang Chen’s ear, “The examiner told me that she is still a virgin, haha.”

Jiang Chen briefly moved his head away. The guy felt like a portable heat source with an unpleasant aroma.

Jiang Chen signed on the agreement as he left five units of crystal on the table. After today, the girl coded 010342 would have nothing to do with Sixth Street.

“You, what’s your name?” Jiang Chen looked at the bruise on the girl’s left cheek and the blood stains on her arms. He moved his eyes away for a moment and took a deep breath.

The bruise was the result of a hit with a gun barrel. Although it was unrelated to Jiang Chen, he felt responsible for it.

“Yao Jiayu,” the girl answered in a quiet and obedient voice, but the tone sounded fragmented and frightened.

“So you understand computers?”

“Yes, I do!” The girl suddenly raised her voice, but she immediately realized her abruptness and lowered her head. “I received a designation of B in computer programming in the virtual education system. So I am confident in both programming and hacking.”

“Oh, then why are you stuck in such a horrendous place?” Jiang Chen looked at the girl with a little shock. If a 16 years old can do that well, then she would be a genius in the modern world. However, this seemed quite reasonable in the apocalypse. The virtual education system sped up the basic education process and trained people based on the individual’s talent and potential. Therefore, a person would excel in one particular area after a few years. Almost everyone who grew up in a survival base received that kind of education. A designation of B was quite distinctive.

The girl’s name, Yao Jiayu, was clearly from a survival base but she ended up here for some reason. It was quite common as the resources at the survival base were depleted, the people inside would leave to search for a new home. Almost everyone from there would go to the survival camp.

“There are a lot of people in the ghetto that can do it.” Yao Jiayu blushed. She then lowered her head diffidently. Afraid Jiang Chen would not be happy; she then raised her head courageously.

“Although I might not be the best in the area, I believe in my potential. I am also very obedient. If you ask me to do anything, I will not resist...” At the end of the sentence, Jiang Chen couldn’t

tell if it was because of excitement or embarrassment, the girl's face turned red like the sun at dawn.

Jiang Chen grinned as she saw the girl struggle to sell herself. He didn't care about the crystals he spent. It's like money; it's meant to be spent.

“Relax, you don't have to be so stressed out working for me.”

Yao Jiayu quivered in agreement. Jiang Chen suddenly realized her clothes. They were thin textiles that laid flat on her small and tiny body. It seemed that everyone in the ghetto wore those types of clothing. After she had left the camp, all her “assets” were confiscated, which included an old jacket.

“Cold?”

She shook her head as she continued to shiver.

Jiang Chen just realized that the girl shivered not because she was afraid of him, but because the temperature was too low.

He let out a sigh. To Yao Jiayu's disbelief, he took off his trench coat and covered her.

“Don't catch a cold, it's difficult to get treated here.”

Jiang Chen wasn't the master of taking care of people, but the

girl silently nodded her head. Her oily hair covered what seemed like a smile of happiness.

“Too lucky.”

“Hmm?” Jiang Chen glanced over.

“No, Nothing.”

Jiang Chen smiled and didn't continue asking. He did a good deed after all, which made him feel warm inside. Maybe this was the trait of a civilized person.

Yao Jiayu peaked at the smile on Jiang Chen's face and then lowered her head in fear as she tightened the trench coat.

[It was warm.]

She didn't say it, but she waited so long for this day. Every day she hid in the corner of the labor market to peek at the people that were buying slaves. She wanted to find someone who was not so bad.

There were ruthless mercenaries, wealthy merchants, and people she didn't understand very well.

But this was the first time she ran to a buyer. She didn't even understand herself. Why did she risk her life to plead at this man?



Maybe it was because of the way he looked in the ghetto. He had a glimpse of a special emotion; the emotion called sympathy. Although it was just a little, and it was almost gone, it was still there.

So if she didn't take her chance then, she would spend the rest of her life in hell. She knew that the reason those bastards in the ghetto didn't touch her yet was that she didn't hit puberty. But once she grew up, she knew she would face the same kind of misery her sister next door faced.

Forced to use her body in exchange for a pack of cigarettes? Or be humiliated by a group of people?

She witnessed her father fight for her mother's life, till death. She also saw her mother's helpless plea. She witnessed too many tragedies unfit for her age.

The world was insane.

If the result would be the same if she had to depend on someone else to survive, why not choose someone that can treat her slightly better. Maybe not better, but if that person beat her a little less, she would be extremely glad.

If she didn't risk it and Jiang Chen didn't buy her, maybe death at the work camp was not a bad finale after all.

# Chapter 11: A Cozy Dinner

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“I mean, are you actually turned on by this?” Jiang Chen sensed a despicable glare directed at him. He trembled at the threatening look Sun Jiao gave him.

“You are overthinking this situation. Yao Jiayu is the IT specialist I found,” Jiang Chen explained with a forced smile. Do I look like someone who is into loli?

Sun Jiao looked at Jiang Chen with suspicion, and then she turned her attention to the girl. Without any sound, she whispered to him.

“Is she trustworthy?”

“I believe she has nothing to do with the Huizhong Mercenaries.” Jiang Chen shook his head.

“I don’t want to hear the word believe. This is for your safety.” Sun Jiao sighed as she approached Yao Jia Yu. With one finger, she gently raised the girl’s head and cautiously gazed into her eyes.

“Do you know Zhou Guoping?” The sudden question didn’t leave the girl with any time to prepare.

But the crystal clear eyes were only filled with emptiness and confusion. Without any emotional fluctuation, she said, “no, I don’t know.”

“Excellent. I need to do a search on you. I hope you don’t mind.” Sun Jiao nodded as a grin appeared out of nowhere.

“Ok...” Yao Jiayu responded in a quiet and obedient voice

To Jiang Chen’s surprise, Sun Jiao unzipped her clothes.

Yao Jiayu’s face blushed to dark red color, but she didn’t resist Sun Jiao’s action. She used her shaking hands to cover her sensitive parts. Her lips trembled slightly. It looked like she was afraid of the older girl in front of her.

From Sun Jiao’s eyes, she didn’t see the same sympathy.

“Come on, what are you doing?” Jiang Chen asked while blushing, as he subconsciously tried to block his vision.

“I am doing a search on her to make sure she is trustworthy. Why are you blushing as if you are still a virgin? Are you still not used to seeing a naked girl’s body?” Sun Jiao mocked Jiang Chen as she rolled her eyes

“Do you want to test me right here right now?” Jiang Chen said defiantly.

Yao Jiayu’s face was still red. She looked at the ground and tried to hide her face. Her body still quivered.

It was not because of the weather; this luxurious room was equipped with a heater. It was because Yao Jiayu was embarrassed. Although she thought she was calm, to be stripped in front of a guy was still too exhilarating for her.

“Ok, no signaling devices or weapons.” Sun Jiao caressed Yao Jiayu’s chest as she stood up. It caused a subtle scream. “Are you sure you are a girl? Why are you so flat?”

Maybe it was intentional; Sun Jiao proudly raised her chest.

Yao Jiayu remained silent. Her face was still red. She kept her head down; afraid to pick up the clothes on the floor.

“What are you even doing?” Jiang Chen interrupted Sun Jiao's mischievous actions. Blushing, he told Yao Jiayu, “you... put your clothes back on.”

“Ok.” The girl picked up her clothes. She had hesitated for a moment before she decided to put them on in front of them.

Jiang Chen thought he might have seen something he shouldn’t have seen. He immediately covered his nose, preventing a bloody nose from the heated excitement.

“Why are you so timid and embarrassed? She’s your slave and now part of your private assets. Even if you wanted to do something, she would not resist.” Sun Jiao said mockingly.

“Oh? Are you not going to be jealous?” Jiang Chen gave Sun Jiao another hard stare. He felt it was necessary to punish the naughty girl for all her comments.

“I will suck you dry.” She said this as she bit Jiang Chen’s ear which made him feel even more aroused.

[Fine, the punishment will come later.] He took a deep breath and recollected his thoughts. “Ok, enough of the jokes. This is Sun Jiao, and I am Jiang Chen. From now on, you are part of the group.” Jiang Chen tried to sound as friendly as possible to the girl who was still confused.

“Yes, master.” The girl said with her head lowered.

“You don’t have to call me master, you can call me Jiang Chen. That electronic bracelet looks unsafe. Since you are trustworthy to me, let me take it off for you.” Although it felt pretty satisfying to be called master by a sweet-looking girl, it still felt awkward to him.

Even though Sun Jiao stared at him like he was a dumbass, Jiang Chen chose to ignore it.

“No!”

To Jiang Chen’s surprise, Yao Jiayu didn’t thank him for his intentions. Instead, she backed away with a pleading look.

“Why?” Jiang Chen was astounded by her action.

“I... I don't mind a master who's so sympathetic. Yao Yao is very grateful. I hope you don't abandon me.”

“I didn't say I was going to abandon you.”

“Even though you are not doubtful of her, it doesn't mean you can trust her. Looks like she is pretty smart after all,” Sun Jiao whispered.

Jiang Chen realized why Yao Jiayu thought that way, with Sun Jiao explanation. He recognized his immature thinking as he forced a smile. He was too used to the logics back in the modern world, but it was obviously different in the apocalypse.

Betrayal, although a disdained word, was not uncommon in this world. Comrades shot each other for the loot, betraying their allegiance to each other; husbands disregarded the responsibility of family for survival. These were all too common in this post-apocalyptic world.

If he took off the electronic bracelet, even if he didn't want to think negative about her consciously, he would subconsciously remain doubtful of her. Unlike Sun Jiao, she wasn't here with him from the beginning. Doubt would sprout suspicion, and any of her future actions would be suspected.

She didn't have any ill intentions nor any combat power. Even if she took off the bracelet, a simple bullet would be enough to end her. She was young, but she was also smart. She knew that if she kept the bracelet on, Jiang Chen would develop trust in her eventually.

That was enough.

If she were obedient, she would not be left behind. She quietly tightened her fists as she made a decision. She didn't have a lot to desire, but she wanted to continue to live. Of course, it would be better if she could be happy.

Jiang Chen somewhat understood Yao Jiayu's intention. He smiled and didn't insist further.

She thought too much. Even if Jiang Chen took off the bracelet, he would not change the way he looked at her.

Jiang Chen always subconsciously used the modern way of thinking to treat Sun Jiao and Yao Yao. Likewise, the two of them also always judged Jiang Chen from their perspective.

From his point of view, Yao Yao was just an immature girl. Even if she was a computer genius, she still did not pose a threat.

Yao Jiayu used the survivor's way of thinking to guess Jiang Chen's thought process. Sun Jiao has a slight idea of Jiang Chen's homeland, but she still couldn't jump out of the traditional way of

thinking. Maybe they both saw his difference compared to other people, a set of value that could only be described as a “naive” sympathy. However, neither couldn’t guess what he was really thinking.

Why? It was because he was not afraid. He could leave the dangerous wasteland at any time and return to his peaceful world. With that, would anyone be afraid of the cruelty in this world?

This kind of thinking may cause him to lose his alertness, but it was not something that changed in the matter of a few days. He’s only been here for a week and has seen a glimpse of the post-apocalyptic world.

Sun Jiao brought Yao Jiayu into the bathroom. Although he was slightly disappointed to miss the opportunity to shower with Sun Jiao, it was a great opportunity for the two girls to bond. It would be unpleasant if animosity grew between Sun Jiao and Yao Yao since Sun Jiao did tease her a bit. That’s why Sun Jiao volunteered to help her shower.

However, Yao Yao still stared at him with her watery eyes, pleading before going in.

Beside the bathtub.

“Yao Yao!”

“Yes!” Startled like a terrified rabbit, she immediately



straightened her back.

“Don’t be so tense.” Sun Jiao smiled as she picked up Yao Jiayu. She gently rubbed her back. “Can I call you Yao Yao in the future?”

“Yes... Yes,” she replied in a frightened voice.

“Don’t be afraid. I am very nice to my people,” she lightly touched the bruise on her face, and said with a gentle voice, “does it still hurt?”

“A little bit.”

“I’ll put some medicine on it after the shower. To be honest, your skin is quite soft after you shower.” Sun Jiao was a bit jealous as she massaged Yao Yao’s neck. Yao Jiayu was like a rabbit caught by a tiger, as she timidly squeezed her body.

“Yes, it’s the third type of hibernation chamber. It can improve body functionality,” Yao Yao replied softly.

“Eh? Hibernation chamber. That’s quite an expensive piece of equipment. So, you are older than me,” Sun Jiao smirked.

“No, No. I entered the chamber when I was twelve. Although I spent 20 years in there, because of the inhibitor I took, my body only aged by about two years. Add the two years I spent at Sixth Street, my body’s age is only 16, and my mental age is 14.”

“Eh? I don’t know that much.  $12+20$ , that’s 30 right?” Sun Jiao’s old tendency came back. She enjoyed teasing what she thought was cute.

“No, I... I am not that old,” Yao Yao quietly rejected.

“So, you’re at the age where you can be eaten?”

“Eaten?!” Yao Yao’s face suddenly turned pale. She had heard about freaks that lived on the wasteland who enjoyed human meat.

“What are you even thinking? This kind of being eaten.” Sun Jiao’s hand lightly caressed over Yao Yao’s small chest.

Yao Yao blushed again and buried her face.

“I, I will be very obedient... If the master wants to eat me, I will not resist.”

“I won’t let that happen,” Sun Jiao jokingly interrupted Yao Yao.

“Eh?” Yao Yao was confused.

“I will eat everything clean.” She proudly raised her chest. It was fun teasing this little loli.

She felt the firm and soft chest push against her back and Yao Yao forced a smile as there was nothing she could do. No one wanted to fight you for it anyways, she said in her head. But even she didn't realize that she was slightly disappointed.

“I need the water!” “Ha!” Joy filled the bathroom.

They were happy spending time together. It's great that they could get along nicely.

Jiang Chen heard the noise from the washroom and a smile appeared on his face. He used a can opener to put the dishes onto the plates and placed them in the microwave. Dishes of delicious meals were prepared and the rice was also ready. Once done, Jiang Chen arranged everything on the table.

Jiang Chen was impressed by his work of art. Who could say I am not a great man, although it was all canned food.

“Woah, it's very fancy today.” Still covered in a towel, Sun Jiao immediately sat down without any regard to delicacy.

“Come on, put your clothes on before eating.”

Sun Jiao did not feel embarrassed at all. She even raised her almost exposed chest out at Jiang Chen and uncrossed her legs to expose more of the steamy view, as if she was saying I am not listening to you.

He felt teased by the scene, but since Yao Yao was beside him, Jiang Chen was a bit shy to just kiss Sun Jiao on the spot. He forced down a sip of cold beer and cooled down.

Sun Jiao was pleased by the way Jiang Chen looked, and she happily chugged a cooled can of coke.

Of course, this guy likes girls with big chests. If Jiang Chen knew what Sun Jiao was thinking, he would spit out the beer.

“Yao Yao, why are you not eating?” He ignored Sun Jiao’s lack of elegance as he turned his attention to the motionless Yao Yao.

She stared at the table full of food as she swallowed a little. She was completely stunned. Pork, chicken, and cabbage. It must be a dream. She foolishly raised her hand and lightly bit on it. Ouch, that hurt.

“Omg, the food tastes so good.”

“Finish your food before opening your mouth. Yao Yao, if you don’t eat now, she is going to finish everything.” Jiang Chen waved at Yao Yao and interrupted her daze.

“Me? I can?” She continued to swallow; her eyes wide open. With a look of disbelief, she said, “it’s also for me?”

“Of course, we always eat together. Okay, slow down, no one is competing with you. Are you not embarrassed?” There was no

delicacy as to how Sun Jiao ate.

“Why, why do you care...” Sun Jiao mumbled with her mouth full.

This girl, even when she looked mature, why does she act like a kid sometimes. Jiang Chen looked at Sun Jiao as he also picked up his chopsticks.

Yao Yao carefully sat down, but she didn't move at all.

“Are you not hungry?”

“No, no.” She lowered her head, and tears began to fill her eyes, “Why, why are you so nice to me? I am just a slave after all.”

Slave? Jiang Chen never thought about it that way. Compared to a slave master, he enjoyed the position of a boss more. Forced obedience was never as good as true respect.

“Don't cry haha, it's bad for your stomach if you cry while you eat. Try this. This is my sautéed pork.” Although it was canned food, Jiang Chen was still proud.

“Ok!” Tears emerged at an even faster pace, which made Jiang Chen even more confused as to what he should do.

This fancy dinner reminded Yao Yao of the happy family she had

before. At that moment, she almost felt time like she was hallucinating.

At that moment, everything was happening before the war. The man in front of her was her brother, and the woman was her sister. The rare moment of joy surrounded the table, and her eyes teared up.

By chance, at that moment, Jiang Chen also felt an illusion.

An illusion known as home.

# Chapter 12: Battle of the Construction Site

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To be honest, Jiang Chen has not been home for a while.

In the past, it was because he didn't feel like he accomplished anything. Thus, he felt embarrassed and guilty seeing his parents. Now, he has finally achieved something. The gold in the mansion was worth at least a million. It was still not enough to buy an apartment in Wanghai city, but it was sufficient to support his parents.

Also, inside the vault of the bank, there was a fortune worth billions.

“What are you thinking about?” Sun Jiao waved her hands in front of Jiang Chen.

Also, I have a girlfriend. Jiang Chen smiled at Sun Jiao as he grabbed onto her hand, and carefully looked at the flawless hand.

“I was just thinking if I should put a ring on you.”

Sun Jiao's face immediately blushed as she fled away, not knowing what to do. Although she was bold most of the time, there were occasions where she showed her shy side.

Jiang Chen laughed as he recollected his thoughts. The dishes were all cleaned and organized. This was the first time he realized that Sun Jiao knew how to clean up. The thought made him quite

happy. Of course, Yao Yao also helped out. Jiang Chen guessed that it must be Yao Yao that cleaned the dishes first and Sun Jiao followed, as she didn't want to feel too guilty about it.

This must be the feeling of being the man in the house.

The planning session began after dinner. Sun Jiao insisted on the meeting being held on the bed. Jiang Chen mocked her in his head as she grew lazier by the day.

Although slightly uncomfortable, Yao Yao lied on the bed as well. She wore Jiang Chen's shirt and jeans that he prepared for himself. He thought he would just pick out a few outfits for her once he was back in the modern world.

The faint scent of Jiang Chen on the clothes made Yao Yao blush throughout the meeting. This was the first time she experienced such a weird sensation which made her quite dizzy.

"First, how to enter the vault. Let me briefly explain for our little girl." Sun Jiao took out the full-sensory computer pen and displayed the three-dimensional image. "We enter the safety tunnel through the underground garage. We then avoid the zombie-filled grand hall and got into the basement which will lead us to the vault's front door. I took this route before so it should be relatively safe. The key is going to be on the main door of the garage, which has a password lock on it. Do you think you can open it?" Sun Jiao looked at Yao Yao as she finished her sentence.

"If it is the security system before the war, I am pretty confident I



can open it. However, I need two days to prepare. Some of the software must be installed beforehand,” she stared at the prism and said with caution.

“Ok,” Sun Jiao replied with a snap.

“Let’s go buy you a computer tomorrow. I also want to buy one for fun. As for the preparation, let’s do that in the mansion.” Jiang Chen always wanted a futuristic computer. He heard those things were dirt cheap at Sixth Street, about the same price as EP.

“Mansion?” Yao Yao turned her head around.

“That’s our base, and also your future home,” Sun Jiao smiled at Yao Yao as she explained.

Home... no matter how many time she heard those word, Yao Yao always felt a warmth surrounding her.

“So the next question.” Sun Jiao’s expression turned serious. “Is about Huizhong Mercenaries.”

“Oh? Did they make a move?” Eyebrows raised, Jiang Chen asked.

Yao Yao’s face spelled confusion as she didn’t have a clue.

Sun Jiao patted her head as she saw Yao Yao’s confused face. She

then began to explain how the story started.

“So, these guys are eyeing master’s fortune.”

“Don’t call me master, you can call me big brother.” Master was a word which made Jiang Chen feel weird, especially coming from a young girl.

“Ok, brother!”

Jiang Chen tried to hide his face full of joy but directly met Sun Jiao’s questioning smile. He was sure that if he did anything inappropriate, he should be worried about his future sex life. He shivered as he immediately dragged the conversation back on track.

“So the result of your observation is?”

“Huizhong Mercenaries’ supports and backups are here. They are patrolling the area five kilometers away from Sixth Street. They have 17 gunmen and one motorized machine gun. That is excluding the fact that these are only part of their power.” Sun Jiao also regained her professionalism. “According to your plan, all the pieces are set in place, and we just need to wait and enjoy the game.”

Jiang Chen nodded as he fell flat on the bed. “Is there anything else we need to talk about? If not, we should sleep early.”

“Well, here’s the problem.” Sun Jiao glanced at Jiang Chen with a mischievous look. “Where are you going to sleep?”

“Hmm?”

“There’s only one bedroom.” She reminded him.

“Of course I am sleeping with you.” Jiang Chen had the audacity to answer as he hugged her.

“I, I’ll go to the living room.” Yao Yao tried to flee from the bed with a blushed face.

Sun Jiao grabbed onto the escaping Yao Yao as she whispered into her ear. “You are sleeping beside your big sister today because a naughty boy is trying to eat your sister today.”

F\*ck, it’s still debatable who is eating who? Jiang Chen sighed.

...

They ended up sleeping together that night in a peaceful way, but it just ended up being a terrible night.

The next morning, Jiang Chen rubbed his still sleepy eyes and sat up. He looked at the completely spread out Sun Jiao and compared her with the curled up Yao Yao. A smile emerged on his face.

Time to make breakfast.

Although it was in the apocalyptic world, it was still important to maintain the proper daily routine. Eating breakfast was one of the few habits that Jiang Chen managed to keep. He placed a slice of bread into the microwave and observed the sky outside the window.

The dawn had not yet broken through the dark sky, but he didn't feel sleepy at all.

He thought about the battle with the most vicious enemies on the wasteland. The idea made him uneasy. Although he prepared for the battle for a long time, anything could happen. The enemy must have prepared for as well. Hui Lei disappeared, which would ring a warning bell to Zhou Guoping. The motorized machine gun was ready for this occasion.

Unless he spent the rest of his life on Sixth Street, the day would come when he has to face the mercenaries.

“Is there anything I can help with?” A faint voice mumbled.

“Hmm?” He turned around with a smile. “Are you not going to sleep a bit more?”

She was loosely covered with Jiang Chen's oversized clothing. Yao Yao shooked her head with eyes still half-closed. “No... No. if Yao Yao is too lazy, Yao Yao will be abandoned.”

“I already told you, I am not going to abandon you. What do you think about every day?” Jiang Chen tousled her messy hair.

Maybe she was still sleepy, but when her head was rubbed at a drowsy state, Yao Yao unconsciously let out a few cute snores.

Due to the advanced medicine, the bruise on her face was already very faint. The scars on her hands were also not as visible. Due to malnourishment, she looked rather thin and weak, but Jiang Chen believed that she only needed time to get better.

“Oh, thank... you.” Answering while still half asleep, Jiang Chen dragged Yao Yao into the bathroom.

“Since you are already awake, wash your face and remember to brush your teeth.” After a couple of words and reminders, he handed Yao Yao her toothbrush, closed the door, and returned to the kitchen.

With a toothbrush in hand, Yao Yao stood in front of the sink still drowsy. Because of anemia, she always felt drowsy in the morning. Even then, her heart was furiously beating.

[What is happening?]

She stood there and stared blankly into space with her hands crossed in front. “Gulp.”

Although drowsy, she smiled blankly. The remaining warmth on the toothbrush felt soothing.

After breakfast, the group left the Tulip Hotel and headed straight to the market. There were electronic stores there that sold full-sensory computer pen that cost a fortune before the war but now only sold for pennies. The store owner also gifted a lot of electronic components for free after Jiang Chen purchased two pens at once. He wasn't too interested in these small parts, but Yao Yao packed everything like she just hit the jackpot.

100TB storage, super high power processor, and low power consumption. The store owner pitched the product, and Jiang Chen was dazzled by the features. However, he was buying the computer pen for Yao Yao, and he only wanted to see how cool this thing was.

Jiang Chen also spent two crystal energies to purchase an EP for Yao Yao. The EP was extremely effective in protecting against radiation. It was also very useful for understanding the body's condition. After accepting so many gifts, Yao Yao was timid. With a reddened face, she kept her head down.

After everything has been completed, they began their journey home.

When their boots first crossed the iron gate, Jiang Chen immediately felt something was odd. Could they be spotted already? Or was it the gene vaccine that made his sense much more sensitive.

“Remember the details of the plan,” Sun Jiao carried the laser rifle in front and whispered the reminder to Jiang Chen.

“Got it.” he shrugged. At the same time, he took a deep breath and pretended to be relaxed. “Remember, this is my idea after all.”

Yao Yao nervously touched Jiang Chen’s hand. She was extremely sensitive about Jiang Chen’s restlessness. However, other than calming Jiang Chen down, she was not too useful. Her goal was simply not to become a burden. After all, her body strength was the weakest.

They slowly turned the street and walked towards Huizhong Mercenaries’ flank spot. Jiang Chen’s heart began beating rapidly. All of a sudden, Sun Jiao stopped.

“This doesn’t feel right.”

“Hmm?” Jiang Chen was fully alert as he took out the PK200 assault rifle from behind him. Yao Yao tightly hugged Jiang Chen’s back. Although she displayed a calmness unfitting for her age, her slim body shivered.

Sun Jiao took a deep breath before suddenly opening the wires by her wrist.

Bang!

Smoke erupted and quickly submerged the street.

“This way, follow me!” Sun Jiao signaled the other two and rushed to the building on the side.

“Dammit! The prey is gone!” A guy with a Mohawk and piercings swore as he slammed into the concrete wall. The machine gun began to rotate. He didn’t know how those three sensed the danger, but he knew that if he screwed this one up, his boss might make him regret it.

“That way! Team Two follow them.”

“Roger, this is team two.”

“Machine gun division is mobilizing.”

“Quick!”

Although they were bandits, the poorly equipped group of mercenaries responded with decisiveness. They surrounded the direction where Jiang Chen fled. The wolf pack style made them quite the enemy.

“Still not here?” Jiang Chen looked at the struggling Yao Yao who was trying to keep up.

“Almost.” Sun Jiao responded impatiently. Then she controlled



her speed so that the two behind her would not get lost.

Gene vaccine was something magical. In the past few days, Jiang Chen felt that his body condition significantly improved. If only these could be used on teens, it would be good on Yao Yao. He did not feel tired at all.

Jiang Chen looked at Yao Yao as she struggled to keep up. Her face was an ashen white as she also had anemia.

Jiang Chen immediately picked up Yao Yao as she was close to exhaustion and before Yao Yao could let out a scream, he dashed to Sun Jiao.

Sun Jiao glanced at Jiang Chen without saying much. She continued to sprint forward, with her rifle in hand.

Yao Yao blankly stared at Jiang Chen's chin. A drop of sweat rolled down his cheek and fell onto her arm. She quietly held onto his sweat soaked clothes as she leaned her head on his shoulder.

She didn't say anything, like put her down, because she knew this was the best option. Although it was a bit overzealous of her, she never hoped to survive as long as today.

She wanted to thank him... No, everything I own is already his. Yao Yao watched Jiang Chen's relentless face with warmth in her heart.

In the post-apocalyptic world, it was normal to die because someone couldn't keep up.

But Jiang Chen would not let this be his normal. He dashed across a half-collapsed Ruins, immediately following Sun Jiao. Yao Yao, in his arms, was not too heavy as she only weighed about 40 kg. What made it difficult was the cracked concrete and the occasional zombie.

The zombies in this area were scattered, but with enough noise, a hoard of zombies may appear.

Since the enemy had vehicles, Sun Jiao must choose complicated and dense roads to travel on.

“Hurry! It's the building in front. Get in there!” Sun Jiao signaled as she still had the energy to talk. Jiang Chen was struggling to keep his breath stable.

After placing Yao Yao on the ground carefully, Jiang Chen immediately leaned against the concrete pole. He pushed himself against the rifle and gathered his breath. Feeling apologetic, Yao Yao knelt beside Jiang Chen and carefully wiped the sweat off of his face.

Guangli Building's logo hung loosely on the roof. The darkened windows made the building look rather intimidating. From the unpainted wall, it was easy to tell that this place was abandoned before completion. Therefore, there were no zombies nor mutant creatures here.

The crack filled wall made the structure look unstable, but for this very reason, Jiang Chen chose this to be the battlefield.

Since they wanted the money, then there was no way they would destroy this building and bury the three of them alive.

The reason why they chose here was to first, take down the initial wave of enemy, which would slow their advances. Then, when the latter enemies arrive, it would be easier to annihilate them all.

Sun Jiao skillfully leaned against the window with the SK10 rifle hidden below. She zoomed into the scope with complete concentration and with her finger on the trigger, she waited for the enemy to appear.

“We are fighting here. Can you still fight?”

“No problem.” Jiang Chen adjusted his breath and stood up. He clumsily fell beside the window, pulled out his assault rifle and opened the safety.

The game began.

# Chapter 13: Battle of the Construction Site

## Continued

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Lu Renjia was frustrated.

He didn't know what the guys he sent to flank did, but it certainly made the prey immediately aware of them, and they escaped right away. All of a sudden, he had no clue what he should do. Although he decisively ordered the soldiers to follow, the effort was futile.

The two of them probably had injected gene vaccines, and a glimpse to greed flashed over Lu Renjia's face.

Gene vaccine, that's something even his boss couldn't afford. Not only did this guy purchase one for himself, but he also bought one for his girl. Why would it even be useful to a woman? To make the sex more fun? He thought about it as he licked his cracked lips, a malicious smile appeared on his face. More fun or not, he could try it out himself after he captures them both. Then after he was done, he could let his boys have a taste as well to see if gene vaccine made a difference.

He thought about Sun Jiao's gorgeous body as he began to feel heated and irrational.

Hot girls were never scarce on the wasteland. The advancement of genetic engineering made genetic cosmetic technology a reality years before the war. The innovation came from the part that it permanently changed the way people looked, as an ability to pass

on genes. Although there were some ethical dilemmas around the topic, everyone wanted to be pretty. The technology significantly increased the standard of the population's beauty. In the late 22 centuries of the apocalyptic world, except for the malnourished, there were plenty of hot girls around. As the raid leader, Lu Renjia kept two as sex toys.

Yes, they were considered as only sex toys.

In the lawless apocalyptic world, with the necessary protection, beautiful girls were travesties and not gifts. If Lu Renjia accidentally died in any of the quests, the two girls would just be the reward for the boss' people. Although the tradition was irrational and obscure, it was unbelievably popular among the mercenaries. Because of this reward system, the ordinary mercenary was often exploded with fervor.

But Lu Renjia was a cautious person. It was a steep climb to be promoted to his position. He feared death hence in every mission he took extreme care.

Even if the two prey were rather harmless, with an even more harmless burden, he chose to stay in the most defensive middle position. He let the most foolish ones run around the middle. As people surrounded him on either side, it formed a protective triangle.

It was because of this carefulness he lived slightly longer.

Boom! A ray of laser penetrated the head of the guy running in

the front and left a daunting blood hole on his forehead.

“Fight! Flight! Spread out!” A Little shocked, Lu Renjia didn’t expect the two prey would fight back. Although caught off guard, he decisively hid behind the half-fallen concrete wall and commanded the team.

Tatata!

Waves of ammo flew across the battlefield; weaving into a storm of bullets. Concrete debris filled the immediate vicinity. Jiang Chen somehow managed to handle the group of five mercenaries.

“Fight, they are so f\*cking rich.” Lu Renjia groaned as he pressed himself against the thick concrete wall. With a finger on the trigger, he prepared to fight back.

“Dumb\*ss, aim before you shoot.”

Jiang Chen forced a smile as he heard Sun Jiao’s criticism. He changed the assault rifle to semi-automatic mode. Jiang Chen played quite a bit of shooting games before, but this was his first time shooting a real gun. Jiang Chen was so tense that he just instinctively pressed the trigger till bullets ran out. Other than scaring the enemy, it only shattered a bunch of concrete.

Yao Yao peaked outside with a frightened look. The occasional bullets scathing by her head made her cover herself as she trembled in the gunfire.

With absolute trust and her fixation on her status as a slave. She didn't ask the question she had: was there any point defending this position?

Jiang Chen continued to breathe deeply, as he tried to aim with the scope. Although it didn't manage to hit anything, it did suppress the advancement of the opposition.

Sun Jiao calmly pulled the trigger of the gun as beams penetrated the sky. Counting the first one, she already took away three lives. Because of this, the number of enemies decreased by half, and hence the firepower weakened. The aggressive advancement tactic changed to a suppressive one where they only fired a gunshot or two once in awhile.

Hidden behind the wall, Lu Renjia held onto his wounded arm. He angrily spat onto the ground. Clearly, the woman on the other side had much better aim, but it was too late to realize his mistake. The terrifying wound was his lesson.

Fortunately, laser rifle wounds do not get infected. He took out a bandage and quickly treated the wound. The consecutive loss of men made him get rid of the idea of taking the trophy for himself. He decided to stay put before reinforcement arrived.

Fuck, after I catch you, I will make you call me daddy. Lu Renjia stared at the direction of the woman with a gloomy cast over his face.

“Dammit, it's game on right away.” Jiang Chen looked over his shoulder, at the collar that was in pieces. With the sudden realization, he started to sweat profusely. If the bullet had been shot two inches more to the left, there would be no more of him. If he died from a bunch of mercenaries, that would be such an embarrassing story.

“Just back off... Leave the rest to me.” A glimpse of anxiety flashed on Sun Jiao's face. Although she kept her cool in the battle, when she saw Jiang Chen's worrisome look, she couldn't keep a straight face.

“No, it's going to happen eventually.” Jiang Chen shook his head as he reassumed his shooting position. A girl can't protect him for the rest of his life.

Although the safety of Jiang Chen was the responsibility of Sun Jiao, Jiang Chen didn't plan to stay behind the affray all the time. With surprise in her eyes, Sun Jiao didn't say too much. She must stay focused in the midst of battle.

As long as she killed more people, he will be safer. Sun Jiao continued to trigger the rifle as the death ray blossomed in the fight.

From afar, the engine roar disrupted the exchange of gunfire. The motorized machine gun finally arrived on the battle.

Tatata! The pouring bullets suppressed Jiang Chen and Sun Jiao without letting them shoot. Waves of uproars ensued.



The flying debris caused minor annoyances as it flew directly across their face, but it was still better than the bullets. Jiang Chen eyed Sun Jiao, and they immediately headed into the building after he received an affirmative response.

Yao Yao was so frightened by the sound of machine guns that she almost couldn't keep her tears from falling but somehow managed to fight back her fear. With courage, she lowered her back and moved toward Jiang Chen.

“Are you not curious as to why we are fighting them here?” Jiang Chen smiled at Yao Yao as he patted her tiny head.

Yao Yao responded with a no as her big eyes looked at Jiang Chen. “I believe you.”

Jiang Chen laughed as he brought Yao Yao downstairs.

“It is, this?”

“Yes, an underground sewer system!”

The cunning Yao Yao suddenly understood the reason why Jiang Chen and Sun Jiao fought here in the first place. It was not because they wanted to escape, but they wanted to hit the jackpot and get rid of the mercenaries altogether.

Jiang Chen discovered the sewerage system through the full-sensory map. In the middle of this building that was still under construction, it had an entrance to the underground sewerage system. Sun Jiao cleared the entrance after her last visit.

They opened the exit as a strong pungent smell quickly filled the surrounding. Jiang Chen didn't hesitate as he jumped in directly. In this parallel world, the sewerage system in this city was much wider compared to Jiang Chen's world.

As soon as they reached the bottom, Jiang Chen immediately turned on the flashlight and prepared for the sudden appearance of the starving mutant rats.

The eight-person wide passage left plenty of space to maneuver. The pungent smell spread from the central sewerage. The road of both sides was relatively clean with pieces of mold. The AI controlled automatic sewerage system meant that the system was still running. Therefore, the sewage flow remained at a constant speed. This vital infrastructure was repaired immediately after the war. Although the project was abandoned, the infrastructure remained functional. There were plenty of AI controlled infrastructure left in the wasteland.

“Be careful. Jump down, and I'll catch you.” After securing his perimeter, he waved to Yao Yao who was still on top.

The pungent smell didn't even raise Yao Yao's eyebrows; she jumped down without any hesitation.

“Let’s wait here for Sun Jiao.” Jiang Chen was relieved that the danger was finally gone.

“Is Sun Jiao sister okay?” Yao Yao was quite worried.

“She will be fine. Don't worry.” Jiang Chen was very confident about Sun Jiao’s ability. That was a girl who managed to tie me up in seconds. Of course, Jiang Chen didn’t finish the sentence.

“Hey, hottie, where’s your man? Did he leave you here for us? Hahaha” The laughter sudden stopped as a blood-gushing hole appeared on the man’s neck.

She dodged the bullet as she mischievously sneered, and threw a flashbang into the affray.

Bang! Followed by a blinding light and deafening sound, everyone who aimed at Sun Jiao went down in pain.

With this opportunity, Sun Jiao dashed into the building as well. She leaped for the sewerage system. Without hesitation, she jumped down and closed the exit on her way.

To her surprise, she felt a firm chest surround her.

“Are you not worried that you will accidentally bang your head in this position.” Jiang Chen sighed as he gave Sun Jiao’s firm butt a slap.

“I am not, my honey.” Sun Jiao seductively raised Jiang Chen’s chin. She did not feel guilty at all as she crossed her legs across Jiang Chen.

As the two of them flirted, the reddened Yao Yao kept her head down.

“I’ll take care of you once we head back.” Jiang Chen lightly bit her ear as he put her down.

“You can take care of them now, my boss.” She rolled her eyes. She then passed the remote to Jiang Chen.

He stared at the ceiling with a slight hesitation in his eyes. However, it was soon overtaken by an iciness; he instantly pressed the control.

“Fuck, where did they go!” Lu Renjia roared at a soldier.

“She, She, She was too agile,” the soldier that was grabbed by the collar said frightenedly. He stuttered as he couldn’t keep his tongue straight.

“Fuck!” Lu Renjia dropped the soldier on the ground.

“Get moving, search the area.” The other big mustache leader had looked at the exit before Sun Jiao vanished with a deathly

stare.

“Boss, there is something here!”

The big mustache immediately ran over.

It's an exit to somewhere. It's locked from the other side. Just as he signaled for a soldier to grab a chainsaw from the car, he suddenly thought of something, and his face turned into an ashen white.

“Do you think they caught the two prey?” A guy with a Mohawk leaned against the car as he chatted with the machine gunner.

“They must have caught them. Look, the gunshots even stopped.”

“Believe it or not, that girl had some accurate shooting. She killed six of our guys and wounded ten more.”

“Since they are caught, and our boss is still not out, do you think they are ... hehe.” A wicked smile appeared on the Mohawk guy's face.

As if he was thinking about the same thing, the machine gunner also laughed. “That's a must! After the boss is done with her, maybe we will get to try as well. Man, I can't get over the way she looked, and her face full of embarrassment, and then... ”

Boom! Fire engulfed the sky. The explosion shattered car windows in an instant. Flaming rocks penetrated through the car and even hit the concrete road.

The howls and screams were deafened by the blast of the falling concrete building. The unfinished building crumbled into pieces in the waves of explosions.

“What’s going on? Hello?” The Mohawk guy dug himself out of the debris with his body stained in blood. He searched for his friend, but he only managed to find an anguished head, not connected to the body.

At the start of the explosion, the machine gunner on top of the car had his neck blown out by the concrete debris. Perhaps this was payback, for all the sins he committed in his life.

# Chapter 14: The Filthy Underground Sewerage System

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“It’s quite dark in here, who knows what will pop up.” With boots covered in stain, Jiang Chen looked around the sewerage system. It was his first time in here, and although the pungent smell made it uncomfortable, he got used to it.

“Scared?” Sun Jiao jokingly asked.

“No way.” Jiang Chen raised his PK200 assault rifle. “I wasn’t even afraid of those guys up there.”

The beam of flashlight spotted a couple of half-human sized rats but made them immediately fleet into darkness.

In the apocalypse, the most terrifying things were not zombies, nor mutants, but were humans.

In the explosion, they were certain that all the mercenaries died. The ten-meter tall building made it almost impossible to escape the concrete debris. Nobody expected that in this desolated-looking building, a trap like that was hidden.

The primary support structure of the building was strapped with wireless explosives. With a touch of a button, the entire building would blow up in explosions.

Initially, Jiang Chen was quite worried about the integrity of the sewage system after the blast, but it looked like he considered too much. Other than scaring the creatures in the vicinity, the sewerage was completely fine. It was evident that the government built the infrastructure with fortitude and integrity. He would probably be buried if this happened in the modern world.

“What do you think Huizhong Mercenaries’ leader would do if he heard that his entire raid team was completely gone?”

“I would imagine that the second we appeared on Sixth Street, he would come and haunt us.” Sun Jiao brought Jiang Chen back into reality.

“Hmm, well this is going to be problematic.” Jiang Chen didn’t even think about this consequence.

“But it is okay. A lot of things can be purchased elsewhere anyways. Also, this is an opportunity to get rid of the Huizhong Mercenaries as a whole.” Sun Jiao naturally created a plan of massacre without even thinking.

Jiang Chen was a firm believer of risk and reward. Even if Huizhong Mercenaries was filled with completely filthy humans, he considered himself to be a merchant. So he didn’t believe in the need to serve justice.

Yao Yao trailed the two of them in silence; she looked around uneasily.



“What’s wrong? Don’t be afraid; big brother will protect you.” Shamelessly, Jiang Chen patted his chest. Since he took care of the mercenaries, he was in a pleasant mood. Yao Yao’s idolized look clearly foretold that she believed in his words.

“Ok!”

“How many mercenaries did you kill?” Sun Jiao pointed out his lie immediately.

“Haha, at least one or two.” Jiang Chen replied with an awkward smile as soon as he met Sun Jiao’s look of disbelief. “Wounded.”

Jiang Chen admits that his accuracy was questionable at best. After all, shooting in games was a lot different from shooting in real life. But with practice, it will only take time before he became a qualified soldier.

“Haha,” Yao Yao grinned with a light laughter. But she soon realized that she probably shouldn’t mock the master, and she carefully closed her mouth. The expression on her face was quite comical.

In this relaxed atmosphere, the three of them headed towards “home.”

“How much longer?”

“Should be pretty close now. There is an exit that can take us to

the top.” Sun Jiao checked the full-sensory map.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen sensed a ghastly danger. His heart started to pound profusely.

Sun Jiao also felt something and stopped moving.

Bang! Bang!

Gun shots were fired all of a sudden.

The bullets from the shadow aimed directly at them. Sun Jiao pushed Jiang Chen to the back with full force and knocked Yao Yao who was behind him over. But she had no more energy to dodge herself.

“Hmm...”

She groaned as she covered her arm in pain. She slammed onto the ground and dropped the laser rifle.

“NO!” Jiang Chen’s felt his body overwhelmed with raging blood. He roared, and within half a second, he dragged Sun Jiao behind cover.

Bullets shattered the ground and created a debris of rocks. An obscure howl resonated from not far away. In a closed environment, the echoing sound spread terrifyingly.

However, Jiang Chen couldn't hear anything. He watched Sun Jiao's closed eyelids. A painful tremble spread from his head to his toe and incapacitated his entire body.

The time they spent together suddenly all flashed in front of his eyes. The brave girl, the gorgeous girl, and the girl that loves me.

She pushed me away. But she...

He stared emptily at the blood stain. In a matter of a second, Sun Jiao went from being incredibly lively to being on the verge of death. Jiang Chen's heart was being chopped into pieces as the pain consumed him.

Flames engulfed his eyes.

"Do you know how to bandage?"

"Yes!" Yao Yao was also frightened by the blood pouring out of Sun Jiao's body. This was also the first time she saw some a terrifying look on an always smiling face.

"I don't know how. Please take care of Sun Jiao." Jiang Chen shoved the medical kit into Yao Yao's hands as he took out the assault rifle.

Bang Bang Bang!

The gunfire unveiled the ugly but happy faces in the shadow. They looked like indigenous people that lived in the sewerage system. So they were used to the seeing in the dark.

Any trespasser would become food for them. Rats, or humans.

“Haha, you fuckers!” Jiang Chen let out a furious roar as he stepped out of the cover.

Bullets flew inches beside his face, but he didn't sense any fear. As if fear was completely removed from his body, and only vigilance remained. He searched for the flashing flares as he opened fire.

It was a remarkable feeling. Every cell within Jiang Chen was screaming, but it didn't make Jiang Chen lose his mind. He was as calm and collected as he has ever been, with his only objective being to kill.

But what he didn't realize was that the EP on his arm flashed a faint yellow light.

He busted an empty clip and snapped on a new one. With force, he continued to fire into the darkness.

Slowly, his vision began to glare. It felt as if everything he saw was submerged in water. The odd disturbance only made Jiang Chen more furious, but his anger only made the disturbance

worse.

He tried to recollect his vision and focus on the target. However, his vision completely changed. Flashing red dots jumped in his line of sight; it was as if small hearts pounded in the darkness.

Or they were hearts beating after all.

With a furious roar, Jiang Chen fired towards those red dots.

The unknown moans and screams made Jiang Chen more zealous. He left the cover and moved to the red dots.

The blinding flashlight was obviously a nightmare for the indigenous who were used to the darkness. Flashing white lights filled their field of vision. They couldn't see anything as they shot blindly into space.

Those bullets had no effects on Jiang Chen. However, PK200's strong penetration power made the thin cover futile. Even if they hid behind cover, they couldn't protect the pumping heart.

Heart exploded one by one as silence ensued. Countless bullets penetrated the bodies of the indigenous people; he wanted to destroy every single one of those red dots.

Slowly, the gunfire from the other side stopped.

Jiang Chen's vigilance and cruelty made the indigenous taste their fear. This man was a devil.

A mentally shattered man dropped his old assault rifle and dashed out of his cover. At the frightened looks of his friends, a bullet penetrated his heart, and the wound bloomed like a bloody flower. The indigenous people were completely terrified; they fled the battle running for their lives. However, Jiang Chen kept shooting.

“You f\*ckers. Stand still. Today is the end for all of you!” With a mental laugh, Jiang Chen continued to roar in the sewerage.

Suddenly, he saw a heart still beating with the glimpse of an eye.

A dark-skinned boy looked at the vicious Jiang Chen with fearful eyes. The pistol in his hand was unable to shoot because of the jammed bullets.

Tatata! The assault rifle breathed the deathly flame as it completely shattered the beating heart that irritated him.

“Who's next?” A corrupted door blocked Jiang Chen's path of advancement; Jiang Chen kicked open the door.

An offensive odor whiffed directly at him. Livers, arms, blood and bones scattered across the room. In the middle of the cave was a giant pot, and a limbless person barely alive.

Even in his furious state, Jiang Chen almost threw up in disgust. But immediately, he started shooting the trembling females and the limbless person.

The sharp scream of the creatures immediately echoed inside the cave. The limbless person left a relieved smile as the bullet penetrated his heart. The gunfire flared at Jiang Chen's twisted face. He was angry, but he didn't know why he was angry. He couldn't even remember his name.

He only wanted to kill, and only knew how to kill. Only death could extinguish the flashing red dots in front of him.

Kang!

The bullet jammed. Jiang Chen brutally slapped the side of the gun. But he didn't notice that there was still someone alive buried among the bodies. Vigilante flashed out of his eyes.

"AHHHHH!" A bloodstained person howled an obscure noise and pushed Jiang Chen onto the ground. Under the scattered hair was a pair of tiny eyes. He sat on top of Jiang Chen, with full force, he pushed the dagger directly onto Jiang Chen's throat. The dagger had previously dissected a countless number of survivors.

"Hahaha, you bastard! Go die." Jiang Chen roared with a hysteric laugh as he guarded the arm with the dagger. Despite how hard the person tried, the dagger could not move a single inch.

That disgusting color... roared! Jiang Chen was so frivolous that he wanted to rip the person's heart into pieces, by hand.

But all of a sudden, a wave of tiredness overwhelmed his body's muscles. He was completely powerless.

The person's looked surprised. With a couple of weird sounds, he pushed the dagger down and almost penetrated Jiang Chen's throat.

Bang!

Blood...

The person was stunned as he looked at the massive hole in his stomach. He raised his head slowly.

It was a crying face, filled with agony and fear.

It was so "ugly," he wanted to rip it apart.

But he was too slow.

Bang, another bullet penetrated his head.

Yao Yao was crying as the gun slid through her hand. She picked up the gun from the boy as she knew how to fix jammed weapons.



After she finished treating Sun Jiao, the first word from Sun Jiao, after she coughed up blood, was telling her to follow Jiang Chen. She said he was in a dangerous state

She saw the plea in Sun Jiao's eyes, Yao Yao also was worried about Jiang Chen. Despite terrified, it took something magical she didn't know to overcome the fear, she followed Jiang Chen's trail.

When she saw Jiang Chen fall, her heart almost stopped pumping. She picked up the gun and fixed it. With her fear suppressed, she pulled the trigger.

This was her first time she killed a person. Although the thing she killed could not be described as a person, it was a human-shaped monster.

Faintly, Jiang Chen felt something warm and soft surrounding his head and hugging him tightly. He also heard a girl's crying voice.

Droplets of water fell beside his cracked lips.

It was salty.

It didn't taste like blood?

# Chapter 15: Fury

---

Jiang Chen didn't want to remember what happened that day in the sewerage system.

He only remembered that he threw up, consistently. Yao Yao comforted him and helped him change into clean clothes. She felt terrible inside too, but since she survived in the apocalypse for a long time, death was a not an unfamiliar sight.

In the end, Jiang Chen shot the natural gas canister in the room.

He watched the fire cleanse the filth in the room without saying a word.

He held onto the quivering Yao Yao and stepped over a countless number of bodies. He left this terrifying place.

Sun Jiao's wound scabbed already. After Jiang Chen came back, she could even walk by herself. Three bullets hit her in the stomach, and one in the shoulder. After he had heard Sun Jiao taking out the bullets by herself, he was only a little surprised. This brave girl always surprised him.

After they had returned to the mansion, he got drunk. He finished all the beers he brought. Because of Sun Jiao's injury, she slept early and Yao Yao took care of him for the night.

She was incredibly understanding. She also felt the agony and

pain. The scene almost shattered any courage she had built up, but she knew that Jiang Chen needed to be taken care of right now.

This compassionate man was almost like someone who had just left a survival base. She remembered the first time she saw a pile of dead bodies, and she almost immediately fainted. However, as soon as she realized that even in survival camp, death was only a routine, she became desensitized.

Compassion was rare in this world, so wasting it would be considered a sin. In the apocalypse, it was foolish, but incredible at the same time.

She heard about the cannibals. They hid within the shadows, under the filthy sewages. They worshiped a distorted religion which prided the act of feasting on the bodies of the same race. Every single one of them was the enemy of any human force. Even the anti-human neo-human group was disgusted by them. Praised for their freedom, Sixth Street outlawed any cannibals from approaching the area.

She placed a warm towel on Jiang Chen's forehead, Yao Yao looked at Jiang Chen's face full of sorrow and then she silently left the room.

“Did he fall asleep?”

Yao Yao paused slightly. Sun Jiao was awake; she had a perplexed look on her face.

“Mhmm, weren’t you asleep as well?”

“Yes, but I can’t fall asleep. Never mind, I’ll talk to him tomorrow.” Sun Jiao turned around.

“You, how are you feeling?” Yao Yao looked at the bandage around Sun Jiao’s waist. That question almost took all of her courage.

“It’s not a big deal. I am quite confident about my healing ability,” Sun Jiao forced a smile as she answered weakly. “By the way.”

“Mhmm?” Yao Yao stopped, just as she was about to turn around. Yao Yao was puzzled.

“... Thanks.”

In the dim light Yao Yao couldn’t make out Sun Jiao’s facial expression, and Sun Jiao went into her room right after. Yao Yao grinned. Although she was not used to dealing with the bold female master, she was a nice person after all.

The next morning.

Jiang Chen sat on the soft bed as he rubbed his sleepy eyes. The sunshine cast through the window was bright.

The radiation cloud finally scattered. The temperature was about to go up; it was the midst of summer in the modern world.

The door slowly opened, Yao Yao's tiny body squeezed into the room.

"Hmm, let me help you wash your face," Yao Yao said gently as she placed a bowl of water onto the head dresser.

He looked at the cute face. A delighted smile melted from his sore face and he touched Yao Yao's forehead. "Don't worry. I can do it. What time is it?"

"It's nine. Let me do it." She wetted the towel and gently rubbed Jiang Chen's face.

It felt nice, so Jiang Chen didn't resist.

"Does it feel better now?"

"Much better. Yao Yao is very caring." His muscle still felt sore, but he was capable of moving around.

Maybe because she received a compliment, but a delighted smile appeared on her face.

"You, are you feeling better?" Sun Jiao also came into the room after she heard some noises. She stared at Jiang Chen worriedly

from the door.

“I am okay, but you, are your injuries okay?”

“I am fine; I need to explain something to you.” Her face suddenly turned serious which made Jiang Chen tense up as well.

Although Sun Jiao loved to joke around, she always treated things seriously when it was necessary.

Just as the mood was about to tense up, Sun Jiao all of a sudden laughed. From Jiang Chen’s shocked look, she turned around.

“Let’s eat breakfast first.”

The breakfast was very delicious, to the apocalypse standard.

There were toast and ketchup.

For some reason, ketchup made Jiang Chen’s stomach feel quite upset.

Sun Jiao looked at Jiang Chen who held onto his stomach nervously; she sighed before taking away the ketchup.

Sun Jiao has a passion for food, but all of the sudden she had no appetite.

It was not because of the cannibals. This was the first time she saw something so gruesome. She was worried about Jiang Chen as it was his first time witnessing the cruelty of the apocalypse. That was only the tip of the iceberg.

“I... I need to go out. I’ll probably be back in a month's time. There’s not a lot of food left in storage.” If he stayed here any longer, he would break down mentally.

He made up an excuse because the idea of interdimensional travel was too complicated to explain.

“Ok, come back as early as you can.” Sun Jiao wanted to say something, but only those words left her mouth.

“Let’s eat.” Jiang Chen gave her a weak smile. He knew that he looked terrible, but he couldn't be brave at this moment.

He was fatigued physically and mentally.

Sun Jiao carefully chewed on the toast and explained to Jiang Chen what happened to his body yesterday. Gene vaccine, theoretically, only slightly improved the human regenerative cell function which would improve the human muscle strength, bone strength, reflex and survivor ability. Jiang Chen opened his EP and saw his improvements in the past three days.

\*\*\*\*

User Name: Jiang Chen

Muscle Strength: 24

Bone Strength: 25

Reflex: 28

Brain Cell Strength: 14

\*\*\*\*

All three basic abilities almost doubled. By modern world standards, Jiang Chen could be described as superhuman.

“Yesterday, because of your anger, you entered fury mode.” She remembered Jiang Chen was furious because of her which made her blush a little. “Normally, gene vaccine will only improve the three basic functions. However, because it changed some DNA in the body, some unpredictability does exist. Someone even grew two heads.”

“What? The thing you injected into me was something this dangerous?” Jiang Chen dropped the toast onto the ground.

“Some probability, almost negligible.” She didn’t want to admit her mistake and chose to change the topic.



“But for some people, the mutations are beneficial, so they received useful abilities. For me, my ability is tenacious.” Sun Jiao stood up and unzipped her clothes.

“Ahem, what are you doing?” Surprised by her actions, Jiang Chen was slightly confused. However, when he saw the flawless waist, he was shocked. “What happened to your scar?” Only three faint white dots were left on the lightly tanned skin. This was the new skin she grew. In a couple of days, he wouldn’t even be able to tell the difference.

“Tenacious’s ability is to increase cell regenerative speed for the non-fatal wound. After the usage of the ability, the body will be frail. Constant usage will also result in cardiac arrest.

Cardiac arrest.

“Your ability is the same. You have to remember you are exchanging your life for power. Therefore, you shouldn’t use it as much. According to EP, it is called Fury right?”

“Yes.” Jiang Chen nodded. He checked the EP yesterday, and it showed “Special Ability: Fury.”

“Clinically, anyone with this ability will be triggered by strong emotional stimulants. The body’s cell will enter a rapid stage of regeneration. In macro terms, it’s an increase in strength and reflex. The specifics are person-dependent. You can find information related to your usage on your EP.

Jiang Chen was surprised by the EP's function. Under Sun Jiao's guidance, he found the document.

Hidden Gene Ability:

Fury

Muscle Strength +20

Reflex + 19

Brain Cell Strength +17

Special effect: Killer instinct, use any of the five human sense to identify the location of the opponent's heart.

Maximum effective duration: Thirty minutes

The fury ability could increase brain cell strength? Make me Smarter? Jiang Chen was quite bewildered.

"I caution you against using the ability too much." Sun Jiao noticed Jiang Chen's surprised expression, and she sighed.

"Why?"

“Did you forget the effect of the ability?”

He remembered he fainted that day and only regained consciousness after a long time.

“If it’s in a safe environment, then it is okay. But in the midst of the battle, no one can predict the outcome. If you met someone you cannot take care of while using the ability, then there is only one ending for you.”

Sweat began to roll down Jiang Chen’s forehead as Sun Jiao explained. If Yao Yao didn’t get there in time, he would be a headless body by now.

“But you don’t have to worry; these abilities are often controllable. You can use special medicine to active and terminate the ability. It will make your ability much more useful. With practice, you can even use your mental strength to control the ability. Like me, I don’t need the assistance of medicine anymore.” Sun Jiao passed on two plastic tubes to Jiang Chen. “Put this inside your EP and match the corresponding color. If you need to active fury, you just need to press a button. The EP will use the micro-needle to inject the medicine into your body. However, my recommendation is still to not over-rely on this ability.”

“Ok.” Jiang Chen carefully nodded.

After breakfast, he packed up his bag filled the gold. The two girls followed him into the living room to say goodbye. Although Jiang Chen reassured them that he would be back soon, Sun Jiao

and Yao Yao insisted.

He hugged Sun Jiao as she kissed him without a slight hesitation. The passionate and wetness of the kiss would not be dull even after a million times.

“The food is in the fridge. There is enough in there to last half a year. Remember to eat the fresh vegetable first; canned foods are not that healthy.”

“Ok honey, can you say something romantic right now. “ Sun Jiao rolled her eyes at Jiang Chen, but her eyes were filled with longing.

After Sun Jiao, Jiang Chen also hugged Yao Yao. “Remember to take care of your body; I want to see a healthy Yao Yao after I come back.”

“Mhmm!” Yao Yao nodded her head.

He felt her pointy chin on his shoulder before he placed her down.

“First, you have to come back.” She asked him with a plea.

Jiang Chen gave her a sincere smile to assure all of her concerns. “Of course I will be back.”

Jiang Chen was about to leave, but he felt a weak resistive force from his waist. He looked at Yao Yao confusedly as she held onto him and just as he was about to ask her why.

Her lips covered his.

There was an elegant fragrance; it tasted like lavender. Yao Yao pecked him on the lips and ran away.

He touched his lips still stunned by what happened; he then saw Sun Jiao's deadly stare.

"You can't blame me for this."

Sun Jiao sighed as Jiang Chen tried to explain. She hugged him again and whispered, "don't say anything, come back soon."

"Mhmm." Jiang Chen opened his mouth, but he only left a simple response.

She stared at his shadow with a perplexed look. The woman was a sensitive creature. She could guess that Jiang Chen was from a country before the war. Only in a structured society would gold have any value. From her knowledge, there was no place in this world where gold has any value left.

Will he come back to this world? She didn't know.

If it was before, she might choose to keep him here. It was typical for people in the apocalypse. But she didn't choose this option.

She saw the fearlessness in his eyes since the beginning. Even if he was tied down with a gun pointed at his head, he was afraid, but he never feared. The companions were all lies; the organization was also a story he created. She didn't know what he hid.

It was not a stupid fearlessness, but it was a calculated risk. Sun Jiao had the feeling that at Sixth Street if he wanted to leave, no one in this world could stop him. He would also do it with less effort than her.

She even had the idea of hiding the gold to control Jiang Chen, but she restrained the idea to her head.

She chose to trust him.

He will not leave me here. He will be back. Sun Jiao believed him. Although if she followed him, she would find out his secret. But, she didn't do it.

It was odd because this was the first she trusted the idea of a relationship in the apocalypse.

Although Yao Yao didn't know Jiang Chen's secret, as witty as she was, she was smart enough to see a slight hesitation in his eyes. She didn't know from where this hesitation came. Maybe it was because of the conflict with the Huizhong Mercenaries, or maybe it

was because of the mental image left behind at the cannibals' camp.

She saw the hesitation in him. Maybe it was because of this uncertainty that made him postpone the vault idea and leave for a period.

This choice made Yao Yao quite relieved. Though it was a gloomy feeling, she felt that if Jiang Chen got the gold from the vault, then he would not be back for a long time.

If Jiang Chen disappeared, she would feel despair. She didn't want to feel that way.

So in the last moment, she followed her heart, and she kissed Jiang Chen.

For the same reason, Sun Jiao didn't stop her despite Sun Jiao's possessiveness. In the end, he needed some attachment in his heart. So, the more, the better.

Then, he would come back.

# Chapter 16: Cashing Out

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Jiang Chen almost cried as he took in a deep breath of the familiar smoggy scent.

The clock on the wall pointed at 11 o'clock, the time in the apocalypse was synced with the modern world. When he left, it was also 11.

He rubbed his temple and slowly took another deep breath. If he stayed there a second longer, he would go insane. He thought his mental fortitude was strong, but he apparently overestimated himself when faced with waves of machine gun bullets and body parts. He didn't quiver at that moment, but he was as traumatized as Yao Yao, if not more.

The familiar noise outside of the window made him calm. Even if the noise bothered him before, it reminded him of the place called home.

Thank god for world peace!

Jiang Chen wanted to scream out these words, but he only stretched his arms and didn't let it out. The constraining force of the civilized society made him hold back. He didn't want to be considered as a lunatic.

He felt the heavy metal behind his back. It made his heart pump a little faster. Gold! He is rich now! He placed the backpack onto a scale and saw the needle pointed at seven kilograms. His heart



pounded furiously. That's mother fucking one million dollars! He didn't know the exact exchange rate, but it was around 200 to 300 dollars per gram which would add up to 1.4 million dollars.

He truly hit the jackpot. He didn't even make 3000 per month back then. He only imagined this in his dreams, but now the gold was right in front of him.

The contrast also made him ponder about his next step. Buy a car? He had plenty of money to do so. Buy an apartment? Pretty close. No no no, he wanted a mansion.

Yes! The vault at the bank!

But when he thought about it, his face immediately dimmed. He hesitated about the idea. He must go back to that place. The apocalyptic world where even the air made you feel suffocated by the cruelty. However, as he was contemplating, a graceful figure appeared in his head.

"I also believe you."

"Don't say anything, come back soon."

"Sun Jiao." Jiang Chen mumbled the name as he touched his lip subconsciously.

Her warm kiss remained on his lip. Another timid character flashed into Jiang Chen's head.

“I, I will be very obedient. If you want to do anything, I will not resist.”

“I don’t mind having such a sympathetic master. Yao Yao is very grateful; I hope you don’t abandon me.”

“Yao Yao.” Jiang Chen repeated the other familiar name. The fresh scent of the kiss, although unexpected, kissed straight to his heart.

All the sudden, Jiang Chen burst out in laughter and let go of all his troubled thoughts.

“What am I even thinking? I don’t like little girls.” He jumped off the bed.

First, it’s time to make lunch. Then, cash out on the gold.

As to the car and house, he wants the fastest convertible and the fanciest mansion. At least it has to be better than his place in the apocalypse.

The entire vault will all belong to me.

As to this money. It’s time to enjoy and relax a little.

He walked into the familiar Kitchen and picked up the already

dusty knife. He made up his mind. First, he will spend every penny he has. Or else it would be difficult to gather the courage to go back.

It would take some time to get used to it.

Along with the gold, he also took the full-sensory computer and pistol. Although he didn't want to bring the pistol back as it was outlawed in his society because he didn't want to make too much of a commotion, his goal was to be rich here.

He brought the computer so that he could watch movies. The store owner promised him that all 100 terabytes were quality movies. He was excited to experience it like never before.

He immediately opened it. The intricate computer projected a rectangular prism made out of arrays of light particles. The interface looked even more advanced than Sun Jiao's computer.

The already excited Jiang Chen immediately opened the folder titled <movie>. He selected the first one from the list.

But the picture that projected completely shocked him.

“Yes, Yes, go harder!”

The arousing sexual scene projected straight into the middle of the room. It was almost as if the action was happening in his room. He immediately closed the computer as the neighbors probably all

heard the noise.

He reopened the computer again, this time carefully scrolling through. He finally saw the names of the movie.

<16 times in the office straight!>

<Secret teaching of a female teacher>

What are these? These are all porn. Jiang Chen finally understood why the store owner made such a perverted face when he sold it to him.

If it was before, he would probably have masturbated to it. But now, things were different. After the countless number of romances with Sun Jiao, he was no longer interested in the one-person activity anymore.

He threw the computer on the ground and carried the hefty backpack. He was hesitant about carrying a pistol. Yao Yao gave him the pistol that saved his life. After a brief pause, he suddenly remembered the storage dimension he had and put everything in there.

Except for the slow activation and power cost of the storage dimension, it was quite convenient. Jiang Chen also didn't lack energy crystal anymore. It only took ten crystal energy to charge the power of the bracelet completely.

He also didn't take off the EP. The design of the EP matched the aerodynamics of the human body. Therefore it looked completely hidden inside his sleeves.

He locked the door of the gloomy apartments behind him. He paused for a second before stepping into the lively and vibrant metropolitan.

The shadow of leaves scattered across the rocky road. It was June in Wanghai city. The symphony of chattering birds echoed through his ear. He stood in the middle of the crowded street and pondered before finally recollecting his thoughts.

Everything was surreal. The chaotic apocalypse contrasted with the serenity of the modern world. Although he only stayed for a few days in the other world, everything there has been engraved into Jiang Chen's mind and memory. The cracked concrete was replaced by a rocky trail. The tree's scattered shadow replaced the reflection of a few branches sticking out of the tree. He held his head high again and took a deep breath. He tried to get the unhealthy feeling out of his skull.

He needed a couple of days to relax. It wouldn't be long before he went insane.

With the back of his eye, he saw a cicada between the tree branches. He didn't see cicadas in the apocalypse, but the cockroaches were as big as a Shepard.

He shooked his head to get the odd idea out of his head and

waved down a taxi to go cash out his gold.

The bank was not an option. There was no way to prove his ownership, so the bank would not accept it and probably call the cops. Respectable gold shops were a good option since they have the capability and would be relatively trouble free. It would only take some discounting on the price to make the deal happen. After all, it didn't cost him anything to get it.

He stepped in front of Goldlion. He chose it purely because of the name.

“Hello Sir, are you picking out a ring for your significant other? We have...” As soon as Jiang Chen stepped inside, the sales lady welcomed him warmly. Although Jiang Chen looked rather dull, maybe he was rich. Her years of sales experience signaled her that Jiang Chen was unique.

“Do you guys exchange gold here?” Jiang Chen signaled the sales lady to stop talking and stated his intention.

She paused and suddenly lost all her interest. She still replied respectably.

“Yes we do, but we only accept gold with high purity. If you have any needs, sir...”

“Get your manager here. You can't decide this deal.” Jiang Chen interrupted her. The sales lady could not make a decision on this

amount of gold.

She looked rather unhappy but remained professional. She didn't believe that a guy dressed so poorly with a backpack could talk about the deal here. She could almost foresee the look of despair after the guard threw him out of the store.

After he had looked at the gold from Jiang Chen's backpack, Liu Anshan gasped.

He worked for Goldlion for almost twenty years. He has seen plenty of people exchange gold, but this was the first time he saw someone do it with a backpack.

Seven kilograms of gold. After the examiner had nodded, Liu Anshan coughed and displayed the most pleasant smile he had.

"It's 7122 grams. The purity is flawless. Do you have proof of ownership for the gold sir?"

"No." Jiang Chen stared at Liu Anshan's eyes and answered decisively.

Liu Anshan momentarily gave a thought before he motioned the examiner to leave. Only two of them remained in the room.

"Let me be honest with you. Mr. Jiang's gold comes from somewhere unusual." Liu Anshan's eyes flashed with intelligence before fading away. The gold's purity was identical to a bank's.

However, gold from the bank usually has a receipt, but Jiang Chen's didn't. The origin of the gold was questionable.

“Don't worry. There are no criminal records on these. The gold is my salary.” Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows and answered without too much emotion. He didn't lie; it was his salary from the apocalypse.

Liu Anshan was also experienced in these matters. Jiang Chen's vibe made him feel quite uncertain. Gold as salary? Could he be a mercenary? That's stretching it too far.

Jiang Chen left Liu Anshan guessing as he didn't explain further. He looked at Liu Anshan and asked, “Boss, do you have any interest in this deal?”

“Yes, of course, Mr. Jiang.” Liu Anshan smiled. “But since you don't have any proof of ownership, it's quite difficult for us to...”

“7122 grams of gold. I'll sell every gram for 220 dollars which come out to be 1566840 dollars. I'll round it 1.5 million. The rest is your tip. The gold is currently trading at 270 dollars per gram. There is no way you would lose in this deal.” Jiang Chen suggested.

Jiang Chen didn't believe someone like Liu Anshan had no way of getting rid of the gold in the black market,

“Haha, Mr. Jiang. Then I must kindly accept this offer.” Liu



Anshan was shocked by the price he was offered. He would make 100 thousand instantly if he took the deal. “Would you prefer cash or transfer?”

“Transfer.” Jiang Chen gave out his account number. After he had received the confirmation, it was a successful deal.

After Jiang Chen had left the VIP room, the sales lady looked hysterically as her boss personally sent the poor looking man to the door.

“Mr. Jiang, this is my business card. If you have any more business for me in the future, please don’t forget me.” Liu Anshan looked euphoric as he just made 100 thousand in a couple of minutes. Jiang Chen was right; it was easy to get rid of the gold through other channels.

The purity of gold was flawless without the need for further purification. Liu Anshan was only required to document the gold before it could be sold on the exchange. Also, apart from the gold itself, Liu Anshan was investing in a long term relationship. He was respectable to Jiang Chen because of the very reason. At least on the surface.

Jiang Chen accepted the card without saying much. He took a taxi and left right away.

Liu Anshan gazed at the direction of the departing taxi.

He was deciding if it was necessary to have someone follow Jiang Chen. He had a feeling that for someone who sold the gold without a blink of an eye, he must have even more.

[If I can find the source of the gold.]

A flame of greed ignited in his eyes before he extinguished it. He decided to be vigilant about the situation.

Life is more important than money after all.

# Chapter 17: Today, I am wealthy!

---

“Hey Buddy, where are you going?”

“Shi Mao! (\*A high-end mall)”

He used to work at a high-end clothing store there as a sales representative.

He rolled down his window and let the bellowing wind blow in his face. As if it was the only way to calm his pounding heart. He even stopped the driver from rolling up the window. The driver looked at him as if he was a lunatic.

“Hehe, did you something good happen to you?”

“Yes, kinda.” Jiang Chen laughed as he caught a mouthful of wind.

After they had arrived at the destination, Jiang Chen dropped a hundred dollar bill. “Keep the change.”

Jiang Chen flamboyantly left the car as the taxi driver stared in shock.

[F\*ck!] He wanted to try to say that for a long time. Finally, he had the opportunity to do so.

After cashing out on the gold, he felt more relaxed than he had in many years.

A famous proverb once said that clothes make the man. In the modern world, people were quick to judge based on how one appeared. Even if he had a three-piece suit on when he went into the gold shop, the sales person would still consider him to be absurd. The concrete ground in the summer day felt like scorching fire..

After all, the first impression was purely dedicated by a person's appearance. The majority of one's opinion would be formed in the first few seconds, which would impact any social interaction in the future.

As someone who was always afraid of poverty, Jiang Chen did not consider himself as a low-key individual. A slick look would make dating or business easier. It would be much more effective compared to the knockoff brands he wore.

He approached the store he had previously worked at. Before he entered the shop, a sneer lit up on his face. He was curious about what the cocky woman that fired him would think once she saw his lavish lifestyle. If he was there to embarrass her, he wanted to be superb at degrading her. Jiang Chen also fancied a few polished outfits for himself.

“Welcome, Sir.” The sales associate was different. It was the end of July which meant that a lot of universities were on summer break already. A lot of college student would do part time here. Luxury stores were the top choice for gorgeous looking girls. It was

respectable, not labor intensive, and also a perfect place to find a sugar daddy.

The evil of capitalism.

Although millionaires visited the place frequently, rarely would they go alone. After all, men usually didn't have a tremendous amount of criteria for clothes. The existence of these high-end stores often served as a place to demonstrate their wealth to their female companion. It would further additional activities at the hotel that night.

Jiang Chen was not pretentious, but his purpose would say otherwise.

Jiang Chen picked out a piece of clothing valued at 10,000 without even blinking. The attractive sales associate's eye lit up as Jiang Chen's hands started to pile full of clothes. She immediately helped him intimately by carrying any extra clothing. She also gave him the sweetest smile. The smile had "ask me out" written all over it.

Jiang Chen, who was busy looking for his old boss, were a little slow to take the hint. He didn't notice the flirty moves of the attractive girl beside him. Of course, if the girl were looking to hookup, Jiang Chen wouldn't mind. Her boobs were not as large as Sun Jiao's, but the vibe of modernism combined with her youthful energy made her particularly striking. She must be a prom queen at some university.

He slapped the clothes on the counter as he was irritated that he didn't see the girl.

[F\*ck, where is she? If she is not even here, what's purpose of this whole thing?]

A gloom immediately cast over Jiang Chen's face as he felt extremely frustrated.

The sales associate thought she offended the millionaire somehow. She carefully examined Jiang Chen facial expression and even started to question her action.

"The total will be 157,000 dollars after rounding down. Would you prefer cash or debit?"

[What kind of question is this? Who the f\*ck brings 150,000 dollars in cash?]

Jiang Chen took out his debit card and glanced around the store again. There were no familiar faces to be seen.

"Debit. What's the name of your manager?" Jiang Chen handed the card over as he asked the question simultaneously.

That question made the sales associate tremble. She thought she displeased him, but why would he ask for the manager?

The cashier who took the debit card also paused briefly. She looked at the sales associate and displayed a professional smile.

“Xu Liping, Would you like me to contact her for you?”

For the amount he purchased, the complaint just could not be ignored. The cashier thought the sales associate offended him and he wanted to see the manager for the same reason.

For these types of part-time employees, she was unfamiliar with them and obviously would not offer a helping hand. There were plenty of part-time employees working at the store from the university every study break.

“That’s fine. Also, do you know Xia Shiyu?” Jiang Chen interrupted.

The cashier raised her eyebrow with a confused look. She didn’t quite remember that name.

[Looks like she doesn’t know.]

With a mixture of emotions, Jiang Chen turned around and left. However, the cashier suddenly opened her mouth as if she remembered something.

“Yes, The previous manager name was Xia Shiyu.”

“Where is she now?” Jiang Chen questioned.

“She got let go because of the layoff. We took over after we received training from the headquarters. So we are not familiar with this place. If there is anything we did wrong, please kindly forgive us.” With a polite smile, the cashier said a bunch of pleasing words. But Jiang Chen wasn’t paying attention.

[She lost her job as well. That cocky girl stayed only for a bit longer. Hahaha.]

Jiang Chen wanted to burst into laughter, but the brief excitement was soon overtaken by a sense of despair. It felt like he had no way to unleash his victorious excitement.

He stored everything into the storage dimension and left the place where he shared a significant amount of his recent memories.

He pushed open the spotless glass door as a wave of cold air emerged. Jiang Chen thought he might as well get his hair designed in this salon. He obviously didn’t make a reservation, but his luxurious looking clothing made the designer welcome him into the VIP room immediately. He only wanted to get a haircut. Although the result would be the same from a street side barber, Jiang Chen only wanted to spend money.

Only an extravagant lifestyle would relieve his tense mood.



Jiang Chen finally understood why corrupted people lived such a luxurious life. If they didn't spend money, how would they stimulate their already frightened mental state?

He leaned against the plush chair as a delicate-looking hairdresser walked in. The hairdresser's wavy hair fitted her flawless and delicate face as if she came from a drawing. The fashionable clothes covered her serene figure perfectly. Even in just one glance, Jiang Chen was amazed by her beauty.

Her lilac scent tingled Jiang Chen's senses. Her graceful hands massaged his hair delicately. With music in the background, it felt like heaven. She made washing hair into a form of art.

What Jiang Chen didn't know was that the designer was also judging him. From the fashion industry, she knew how much Jiang Chen's wardrobe cost. With that, he was also great looking. Compared to the customers she has served in the past, a lot of them were either bold or had a huge beer belly.

She peaked at the muscular chest. Although covered with a layer of clothing, she could almost feel the firmness. The female hairdresser blushed as she began to daydream. [What would it feel like to be with this guy?]

“The water is a bit hot.”

“Ahh! I am so sorry sir.”

Jiang Chen was a bit confused. In theory, she shouldn't make a mistake like this. It interrupted his almost short nap. He didn't seem to be bothered by these mistakes.

After his hair was washed, the dresser gently used a towel to cover Jiang Chen's hair. With soft movements, she dried his hair gently. Every detail was performed to perfection. It was the ultimate pleasure. Especially when her leg slightly brushed against Jiang Chen's hands, the silky smooth feeling was sensational.

The designer even gave him a massage after. Her soft finger turned and twisted on top of his head as if she was playing a symphony. The rhythm of her fingers was so pleasurable that it made Jiang Chen almost moan out.

Jiang Chen checked himself out in the mirror after the completed service. Although his hair was not that different, his presence completely changed. His brand new outfit combined with the haircut spoke sophistication on every level.

After, he wandered into a busy mall, a place he passed before but never had the money to buy anything. Though now even with money, he didn't know what to buy with all these choices. He thought, only if Sun Jiao was here.

Jiang Chen laughed self-mockingly. That idea was as unrealistic as it could be. It would be difficult to explain everything in the first place, let alone the feasibility of taking a live person with him to perform interdimensional travel.

The crowded street felt lonely by himself.

Most of his close friends left the city to either go home, venture out, or leave the country. He was only one that remained in the crowded and emotionless city.

His contacts were full of numbers, but he didn't have anyone to call.

The benefit of shopping alone was that he had complete freedom. He could buy anything and eat anything he wanted. He passed a women's clothing store and almost walked in. However, he quickly realized how weird it was to go in without a female companion. So clothes shopping for Sun Jiao and Yao Yao would have to be next time.

As the sky turned into a dim yellow, it was dinner time.

He sat in a high-end restaurant, alone. He chose whatever was the most expensive at the time. King crabs, lobster, and steak. He didn't know if he would finish everything or not, but he still ordered ten dishes. The server had a look of disbelief and concern, so he slapped his debit card on the table.

After the gene vaccine, Jiang Chen's body condition significantly improved. Therefore, the amount of food he ingested also increased substantially.

The server looked horror, as Jiang Chen feasted on the meal. He

managed to finish the majority of the dishes.

The rest of the dishes, he didn't plan to pack up.

He walked out of the restaurant and left the server dumbfounded. It was not the first time the server saw someone eat such an unbelievable amount of food. However, it was the server's first time seeing such a sophisticated and fit person finish almost everything on the table.

These dishes were all made of meat too.

## Chapter 18: Encountering an old friend

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The saline sea wind calmed Jiang Chen's irrationality. He looked at the people walking by him. The scene of aged grandpas, couples, and tourists distracted him from reality for a second. He rubbed his temples tiredly to get rid of the drowsy feeling. He was a bit tired.

After the extravagant spending spree, he blew two hundred thousand in just an afternoon. After the moments of excitement, the wary feeling of an emotional roller-coaster remained.

He took a taxi to the beach; he just wanted to take a walk and feel the sea wind.

The beach was quite a famous sightseeing attraction in Wanghai city. There was the marble fence by the golden beach. The victorious comrade's famous remake engraved into the stone statue, marking his longing legacy. Finally, the modern looking small hut filled the empty space in the picture. Jiang Chen heard this place from a couple of his buddies, but they only talked about how many hot girls there were.

They were right after all...

However, this was his first time here even though he's been in the city for four years already. He never came because of two simple reasons. He had no money, and he had no one he could bring along. But if he had the money, then there would always be someone. So him never going to the beach was because of the first

reason after all.

It felt lonely shopping alone, and he felt the same visiting the beach.

Though he was still alone, he no longer pondered about life.

He had the money. Although one million was nothing in Wanghai city, there were plenty of rich people in this city and he couldn't even buy an apartment, his mental state was drastically different. He was not arrogant, but he was certain he was wealthier than Bill Gates.

The entire gold deposit of a commercial bank was at least a couple of billion. What would all the gold in the apocalypse be worth?

Of course, he had to be careful in the sell-off strategy. A large amount of gold in the market would depreciate the value of the gold significantly. Long term wise, he only planned to raid the vault's gold. There were many other ways to make money.

There were more attractive markets available for him to profit off of. For example, the advanced tech he could bring back. If he sold the full-sensory computer, the market cap of the company would be in the trillions. The virtual reality education system. The hibernation chamber. These were all trillion dollar ideas.

He must take a step at the time to build his empire. If he suddenly

introduced the technology to the market, the money would come, but so would the government. Maybe it would even be intelligence agencies who are usually hidden in the dark. Thus, being bold would be unwise.

Once he acquired the gold, his initial capital would be ready. The planning and strategy would ensue. Step by step, once he possessed enough stake to form a conglomerate, nobody would be able to touch him.

For this one million, it was just for enjoyment purposes.

So Jiang Chen didn't feel odd as he stood by the shore. What before could only be achieved in his dream were all within his reach. The stunning beauties, the magnificent mansion, and the luxurious cars.

He burped as he threw his beer can into the garbage. He was a little tipsy, as he took another breath of the saline filled sea wind.

“Hey dude, do you want to join us?”

A girl in a bikini smiled at him; her stunning figure was flourished with youth. Her hobby reading magazines meant that she easily saw how expensive Jiang Chen's outfit was. The deep but lost gaze made him appear as a powerful CEO that just went through a bad breakup.

People in the middle of a breakup were the weakest emotionally.

Su Fei thought she possessed the techniques of love. She first got rid of her best friend and approached Jiang Chen. Her smile was as sweet as a freshly baked cupcake.

She didn't care how many relationships this guy went through, nor the fact that he might still be in one. She was envious of her roommate because she has a sugar daddy which meant countless amounts of money, LVs, and Hermes. She was jealous, as she thought her beauty was comparable to her roommate's.

If she tried to flirt, she would also get a rich guy, and this guy looked much better compared to her roommate's sugar daddy.

Su Fei's heart pumped faster as she imagined.

"Hehe, no thank you." To Su Fei's surprise, the man only looked at her once before rejecting her with a smile.

"Leave your youth to someone more meaningful." Jiang Chen didn't turn his head as he walked away. Su Fei stared blankly in place.

That girl must have thought I was mental. Jiang Chen hysterically laughed disregarding the looks of passersby. He stumbled mindlessly along the beach. The gene vaccine also increased his body's detoxification process. It made the alcohol process much faster in his body. He enjoyed the slightly dizzy feeling, and he wanted it to last a bit longer.



He rejected the girl because he didn't have any desire. Although she was quite attractive, she was still lackluster compared to Sun Jiao. As to the arrogant statement, he only said it because he felt like it.

The night began to cast its shadow on top of the Metropolitan, but the life of the city only just began. The crowded street made Jiang Chen irritable, and he wanted a moment of peace. It was too noisy here.

“Maybe it's time to go back.”

He sobered up as he still mindlessly walked through the street. All the sudden, a familiar figure caught his eye. He was slightly shocked as an odd expression appeared on his face.

Xia Shiyu graduated from Wanghai University with a major in business administration. Her stellar academic record along with a stunning appearance made everyone shower her with praise and envy, and she graduated at the top of the class. Even though the graduated from the same university, they lived completely different lives.

However, because of family reasons, she didn't pursue graduate studies. Instead, she chose to work at a clothing store. Due to her outstanding performance, she was promoted to store manager at an excellent location. This gave her the perfect platform to display her prowess.

Once Xia Shuyu was promoted, she immediately implemented a

list of action plans which increased the store's sales substantially. However, because of her strict performance measures, she acquired the nickname of the “cold beauty” among male colleagues, and b\*tch among female workers. After all, everyone was envious and jealous of her, especially those of the same gender.

Not only was she accomplished in her career, but she also had a boyfriend that loved her. Her boyfriend always picked her up after work, even though it seemed like the overachieving manager was never nice to him. Due to her personality, Jiang Chen has even made fun of her, behind her back, about having a disruptive menstrual cycle because she always looked displeased.

So this was how the tragedy happened. It was rumored that Xia Shuyu heard it by coincidence. She then investigated it and found the “mastermind” behind everything. Then, she used some petty excuses to fire Jiang Chen from the place.

Jiang Chen still remembered the coldness and mockery on her face. After all, humans are humans. Despite how righteous someone is, there may be times when they would act irrationally due to their emotions. Jiang Chen didn't think he was wrong; it was only a joke which made him lose his job. Who cared about these types of demeanor? However, Xia Shuyu did not accept any of that. She was used to the praise of all the men. She could overlook the judgment from the females, but not the “disrespect” from men.

That was her character weakness or flaw.

At that time, Jiang Chen even wanted to take revenge. Though after he had relieved his frustration by drinking, he let it go because he thought it was not worth it. Life must continue, this is an ordered society.

Xia Shuyu was still the manager, and the store would continue to operate without him. But things felt different from that day on.

Ability is one thing, and academia is one thing, but opinion is another.

After the friendly Jiang Chen had been fired, his friends from work were enraged by the decision. Everyone started to oppose the way Xia Shuyu managed. The constantly high-pressure environment brought short-term improvements but made the overall work atmosphere was oppressive. She never was part of the team but asked the team to act according to her standard. Maybe she was justified in her management, but she didn't consider the human emotion.

When an average salary started to conflict with exceptionally high expectations, the complaints only grew. These frustrations were reflected in the employee's work and ultimately impacted the sales figure.

Although they were pleased with this top student's performance and her exceptional sales record, upper management ultimately decided to let the relatively inexperienced store manager and a few poor performing employees go. They replaced her with a backup talent.

She, who was appraised as the top student of the business school, actually lost her job in a matter of one year.

She was in agony and didn't know what she did wrong. Or maybe as smart as she was, she already knew what she did wrong. However, it was too late to fix everything. She still remembered the guy she fired. It was after that that everyone began to look at her different. At first, they were respectful, but soon it was dusted with a sliver of disdain. It also applied to the male employees who used to praise her.

She also suffered in her relationship after she lost her job.

The boyfriend who used to do everything she said broke up with her. With the excuse "I spent so many years with you, and you didn't even let me kiss you. Hehe, go be a virgin." He left immediately with his new girlfriend. Perhaps it because she couldn't support him financially. The boyfriend didn't even bother to hide the fact that he cheated.

It was satirical. Xia Shuyu always thought he loved her. She thought it was a kind of unconditional love. Only he persisted after her for the longest time, and he continued even after graduation. She said yes because of that. She didn't love him, nor was she interested in any guy that chased her. She knew she would have to marry one day. So in the most efficient manner, she chose the one that persisted for the longest time.

But reality betrayed her. She almost fell in love with him. Was it

because they didn't kiss? Or have sex? Love couldn't even stand such a minuscule test? Xiao Shuyu was lost and confused. She promised him that she would give everything of hers to him on the day they got married.

That was not what defeated her the most.

Maybe it was revenge. The guy used Xiao Shuyu's social ID as collateral for a loan and used the money to pay for a car. Each month, she would spend half her paycheck to repay the loan, which was okay until she lost her job.

A car worth 500 thousand was nothing in the past. If she worked for two more years, she could easily afford it. However, she was now unemployed and the amount was a massive hole for her to fill. Although with her ability it would not be difficult to find another job to repay the loan, there were so many graduates each year that it would be a nightmare to stand out in the labor market. She already lost her competitive edge.

Also, all the offers were based on disgraceful conditions. Such as high salary in exchange for sexual favors. If the candidate did not comply, then they moved on to the next one.

In a country so populated, it was not difficult to find someone with ability.

The more satirical part was that she was not even the one that possessed the car.

She thought about calling the cops, but the loan was not from an ethical source to begin with, which meant that they would not take it lightly either. There was no way she could deal with the gang.

She fled from her original apartment and hid in temporary housing. She made a living working part-time in hopes of solving the problem through legal means. At the same time, she desperately maintained her hopes of finding an ideal job.

But her luck ran out.

A few maliciously looking guys surrounded the place she worked. They were clearly not there to negotiate.

# Chapter 19: The Stereotypical Prince Saves the Princess Scene

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“Yo, looks like you have been quite well off in the last few days.” A guy with a clean cut whistled and stood there rascally. He was known as “Sir Tiger” and was a thug under the Hongyi Gang. He trained in martial arts for six years. One time, he single-handedly defeated a group of five gangsters which allowed him to receive special recognition from the big boss at Hongyi.

Although he was not a person of importance, he did have a bunch of followers. Rebellious students that called him “big boss.” He enjoyed being the center of attention.

He spent the majority of his time as a bouncer at Hongyi’s night club and occasionally collected loans for his boss. It was an excellent lifestyle for him.

As unexciting as it was to collect money from a girl, especially when the girl considered calling the cop, her attractiveness made up for the trouble. Thus, he decided to let the incident slide. Besides, did she not know who she dealt with when she borrowed money from Hongyi in the first place? A perverted smile emerged on Liu Hu’s face. His gang already surrounded the flower shop. The customers who were there immediately left.

The busy flower shop was suddenly empty. The shop owner with a frightened look was trembling. He was also afraid to call the cops as he didn’t want any more trouble. With this many thugs here, there was no way to do business.

“Come out? Do you need me to send you a formal invitation?” Liu Hu blew a whistle and looked at her as if she was a prey.

Xia Shuyu bit her lips. Her flawless face was covered by the gloom of terror. She noticed the plea in the store owner's eyes. She sighed as she put the flower down quivering. She walked over with fixated but tense steps.

“I can't believe you are still working here.” Lu Hu reached for her face. “Do you have the money for me?”

But to his surprise, the resilient girl avoided his hand.

“I'll repay the money while working. Please don't bother me anymore.” She took in a deep breath and answered without any emotions.

“Work? With this? How long would we have to wait? Hehe.” He didn't seem angry when she avoided his hand, but a grimness filled his eyes.

“What do you want?” With a stern face, Xiao Shiyu stared at the rascal. She was terrified as her legs trembled. But the resiliency deep in her bones made her stand her ground.

[This girl is interesting. Even though she is scared to death, she is still giving me the attitude.] Liu Hu raised his eyebrows, and he pondered with a smile.



“Two options. Money, or you.” He put up two fingers.

“I don’t have any money right now.” Xia Shuyu tried to remain calm.

“Then it’s a simple problem. We’ll take you.” He reached out to shake as if the deal was already made.

“Me?” Xia Shiyu hissed at the remark, “You guys are not afraid of getting accused of human trafficking?”

“Hahahahaha.”

Everyone, including Liu Hu, laughed hysterically.

That made Xia Shiyu feel humiliated. She didn’t think it was funny at all, but she could not deliver a comeback. She thought she could live a fulfilled life as an independent woman by working hard. She would support herself, her parents and realize her value.

But the reality was harsh.

“No No No, that’s a waste. Particularly for a beauty like you.” Finally finished laughing, Liu Hu looked at the thugs behind him, “At least we need to let everyone get a taste of you for a few years before selling you to someone as a wife. What do you guys think?”

“Hahaha, maybe we will even visit you to help you with your business.”

“Why don’t we sell her to Sir Pi? That bastard loves wh\*res.”

“F\*ck you. I like wh\*res, but I never said I was going to marry one.”

After hearing all the rude and perverted comments, blood almost seeped out of Xia Shiyu’s lips because she bit it so hard. She wanted to cry; she wanted someone to save her right now. Even in her most difficult time, this thought never crossed her mind.

Tears of humiliation filled her eyes, and she even thought of killing herself. If they take her away, then it would be better off to die.

Liu Hu was experienced in debt collection. He knew what Xia Shuyi was thinking when he saw her expression, and he signaled his thugs to be quiet.

“Fine. I know this is unfortunate for you, but this is the rule. You pay if you owe money. Don’t worry. If you work for a couple of years in the Hongyi night club, you can leave once you pay your debt off. No one would know anyways. Then, in the end, you can just leave the city and marry someone nice. Just don’t borrow any more money you shouldn’t borrow in the first place.”

That was a tactical move. Sticks and carrots were stereotypical,

but it was extremely useful. The rude comments were probably part of the plan to set all of this up. Thugs are scariest when they are knowledgeable and well managed.

Jiang Chen wanted to keep watching, but the crushing look of his previous boss made him abort the idea. Although he hated her before, he didn't want to see her breakdown.

[Fine, I will help her.]

In the past he would be terrified if he met a bunch of thugs, but now.

“Hehe, how should I address you sir?”

Liu Hu paused momentarily. He didn't even realize there was someone that passed him a cigarette.

With teary eyes, Xia Shiyu looked at the man with pure disbelief. Her face had shock written all over. Is it him that stood up for her? The guy she fired in a moment of rage? She felt a sense of regret for her careless actions in the past, but she didn't imagine her next encounter with him would be in such a scenario.

[Why is he here? Why is he standing up for me? Shouldn't he be watching this drama right now as a bystander?]

Her face was completely stunned by everything that just happened. Regret, sympathy, sincerity, and confusion?

“Liu Hu.” Liu Hu was dumbfounded. He was shocked by what just happened. Who would dare to talk with a gang when they were in the middle of something?

Cop? Liu Hu immediately rejected this idea. His boss has connections at the police department. So, unless the incident made headlines, they would not be involved.

Retard? Liu Hu’s facial expression suddenly changed.

“What a coincidence. I just met a friend of mine here.” Jiang Chen laughed. He then changed the topic, “I heard the conversation. How much does she owe you?”

Liu Hu examined Jiang Chen with his eyes squinted. In his opinion, this guy was too calm and collected.

His boss’s mission for him was to bring the girl back if possible. The interest on the loan was nothing compared to the potential revenue she could generate at the nightclub. This girl’s perfect look and the gorgeous figure would sell her as a top choice at the nightclub. That was the cash generating business for the gang.

“Buddy, are you looking for trouble?” Liu Hu sneered as he reached for Jiang Chen. Xia Shiyu’s heart almost jumped out of her throat as she nervously watched the guy that stood up for her.

“My clothes cost around ten thousand dollars. Can you buy me a

new one if you rip it?” Jiang Chen sighed as he clinched onto Liu Hu's hand. With his reflex stats of 28, it was not enough in the danger-filled wasteland, but it was certainly sufficient for these thugs in the modern world.

Liu Hu felt as if both of his hands were clamped down. He couldn't even move a single inch.

[F\*ck, this guy must have trained in martial arts before.]

He realized he messed with the wrong person. Although he wanted to backup, since all his thugs were watching, the ruthless side of him came out as he flipped out the knife hidden in his left hand. Then, he slashed at Jiang Chen's head.

Jiang Chen slightly turned his head to avoid the slow moving knife. He then pushed Liu Hu away.

“F\*ck, you think you are tough? Guys beat him up!” The thug that was obviously connected to Liu Hu saw the tide of the fight turn. He wanted to escalate the fight from one on one to a full brawl.

Jiang Chen sighed. If he knew this conflict was tedious to resolve, he wouldn't have worn expensive clothing to a fight.

“Why don't we go to the ally there? There's monitoring here.” Jiang Chen casually pointed to the alley.

Liu Hu paused again. His reaction was abnormal to Liu Hu. He didn't look the slightest bit afraid, which made Liu Hu unsure. Since he already proposed it, it would be cowardly if he didn't agree. How would he maintain his reputation in front of his thugs?

“Hehe, what a brave guy. Please.” Liu Hu fixed his collar as he signaled towards the alley.

[What a show-off] Jiang Chen didn't imagine Liu Hu would have the audacity to go even if it was a brawl. Jiang Chen stepped into the alley.

A sneer appeared on Liu Hu's face as Jiang Chen followed into the alley. [Regardless of how good your martial art is, there is no way you would beat ten people. Do you think you are superman?]

He left the most useless thug to keep an eye on Xia Shiyu. The rest of the thugs followed him into the alley.

Worried about Jiang Chen's safety, she anxiously thought about possible solutions. She considered calling the cop, but the thug was looking at her fiercely. She glanced over at the store owner that always took care of her before, but he just pretended he didn't see anything.

She had the urge to cry with a mixture of emotions. Not because she was afraid, but because she felt helpless.

She didn't rely on anyone in the past ten years. The weariness

caused by her resilience overwhelmed her by her helplessness.

“Beat him up...” Just as he opened his mouth, Liu Hu’s rascal expression froze.

A pistol was pointed at his forehead.

“There’s no monitoring here.” Jiang Chen shrugged. He didn’t expect the pistol that Yao Yao picked up would be useful. He didn’t mind teaching these thugs a lesson with his fist if it was not because of his clothing.

“Fake... It's fake right?” Sweat rolled down Liu Hu’s forehead. He forced a smile and stared at Jiang Chen. He wanted to look for the uncertainty, which would give him courage.

Jiang Chen moved the gun and pointed elsewhere.

Bang!

The explosion of the bullet struck like thunder beside Liu Hu’s ear. In such a close range, it almost popped his eardrum.

“Ahhhhhhh...” A thug covered his leg as he fell to the ground. His face was pale and twisted due to the unbearable amount of pain. Everyone just stood there terrified; they didn’t dare to help the guy.

The bullet penetrated through the thug's leg and pierced into the concrete ground. The poor bastard that got shot was the thug that wanted to fight outside. He should have thought about this when he tried to escalate the whole thing.

## Gun

It was dead silent. Only the lunatics and the cops had guns. His boss once told him that. He never touched a gun before, but he memorized it by heart.

Regardless of which type, they were all extremely dangerous.

There were many gangs in Wanghai city. If Liu Hu accidentally offended a person of power, nobody would say a thing if he died.

“B... Boss, there is always a solution. No need to bring a gun into the conversation.”

Jiang Chen pressed the burning barrel against his forehead. He resisted the pain as he was too terrified to move. The skin on his forehead was probably burned, but he couldn't say a word.

“I tried to come up with a solution, but you always interrupted me.” Jiang Chen made a harmless expression.

[This guy must be crazy!]



Liu Hu swallowed his fear. He kept laughing to alleviate the intensity of the situation.

“Ok, I don’t have all day for you.” Jiang Chen tapped Liu Hu’s head with the gun. Liu Hu noticed that Jiang Chen didn’t close the safety. He was drenched in cold sweat. It was the first time in his life that he felt so terrified.

“Do we have an agreement?”

“Ye...Yes.” Liu Hu quivered as he took out the agreement.

“What’s your bank account number?”

“Hmm?” Liu Hu was confused as to what Jiang Chen meant.

“I’ll repay the money. Are you dumb or what.” Jiang Chen suddenly raised his voice which made Liu Hu heart pound even faster.

“Repay the money?” In a trembling voice, he asked. He thought he heard it wrong.

“It’s as if you sold me the debt. Do you understand what that means? What’s in your brain? Do I look like the type who wouldn’t pay?” Jiang Chen stuffed the gun into his pocket.

“No, nope.” There was no way Liu Hu would answer yes.

Ripping the debt would not be a solution as Hongyi Gang would not easily let this go. Jiang Chen was not afraid. Xia Shuyu, on the other hand, would be in danger.

Jiang Chen had things to take care of in the apocalypse. He didn't have enough time to look after Xia Shuyu. He only helped because he was a good person with no intention of putting any more effort into this. His time was quite valuable as he was planning a trip to a famous tourist city Sanya.

Changing the ownership of debt was the best solution Jiang Chen came up with. She could repay him while maintaining her dignity.

He didn't care about the money, but he did not want to just write the debt off for her. The high-interest loan was illegal but repaying the principal amount was reasonable. If he didn't have the opportunity to oppress his previous manager with the terrible attitude, it would be a waste of a beautiful chance.

Also, Jiang Chen had previous considerations as well.

Liu Hu happily accepted the payment as he furiously bowed to Jiang Chen. After Jiang Chen repaid the 410,000 dollars, he immediately left while hustling the injured thug. There was no way he would dare to ask for interest. He was sure his boss would not blame him since the other person had a gun. Jiang Chen was in good faith to repay the principle amount.

They rushed out of the alley without daring to ask Jiang Chen's

name.

Jiang Chen scorned at the direction Lu Hui left as he threw the gun into the storage dimension.

He touched his face and stepped out of the alley.

Hmm? Where did the blood come from?

## Chapter 20: Xia Shiyu in Despair

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“... Are you alright?” As she stared at Jiang Chen, who approached her, she bit her lips and ran out of words to say.

“Not exactly okay, a minor injury.” Jiang Chen had the audacity to point at the small cut on his cheek. If he didn’t point it out, it would have gone unnoticed.

“I, I’ll treat it for you.” Xia Shiyu lowered her head, full of guilt. She had never owed favors to anyone, but now she owed this person so much.

“Here? Saliva can disinfect it.” Jiang Chen joked carelessly. It even surprised himself a little.

[Hmm? When did I get so flirty?]

“... I have bandage and alcohol at my place.” Xia Shiyu coldly answered Jiang Chen’s mockery

“Don’t look at me like that. At least I am your new creditor.” Jiang Chen waved the agreement between his fingers. “Look. Though since I am a nice person, I won’t charge you any interest.”

[Is there anyone more narcissistic than him?] Xia Shiyu stared at the smiling Jiang Chen with a look of defeat. She was confused. This was the same guy that was afraid to make eye contact with her?

“I’ll repay you, including interest.” Xia Shiyu expressed her gratitude with certainty in her voice. And then more hesitantly, she said “With normal interest rate.” She wasn’t confident in repaying the high interest on her debt.

Jiang Chen shrugged as he knew this girl too well. She would not back down from her goal.

“Xia Shiyu.”

“Yeah?” Xia Shiyu turned her head after the store owner called.

“This is your salary for half of the month. I am sorry, but there is nothing I can do about the thugs. Also, you don’t have to come to work tomorrow,” the store owner said laboriously as he finally said the disheartening statement in an almost pleading tone.

After she had taken the envelope of money, she nodded her head emotionlessly. She gazed at the flower shop that was about to close. Evading and doubtful looks surrounded her as people looked away when she tried to make eye contact. She didn’t know why she wanted to cry.

She couldn’t remember the number of times she almost broke down, but this was the first time in her life that she felt so fragile.

“Fired?” Jiang Chen said mockingly. He felt so joyful seeing his manager got fired again.

She didn't answer Jiang Chen's mockery. She bit her lips, full of emotions. She turned around and headed home as Jiang Chen followed. Xia Shiyu did say that she was going to help him with the wound.

By now, the wound had already scarred up, but Jiang Chen was curious about where his ex-boss lived. He had nothing better to do anyways.

Jiang Chen chuckled to himself as he thought that he was a terrible person. Almost as mischievous as Sun Jiao.

Jiang Chen stepped onto the moldy stairs, and a frown appeared on his face. He was surprised that Wanghai city even had a building this old. The crack-filled walls indicated that this place was not pleasant.

Xia Shiyu pulled out her keys and opened the rusted door. A bitter smile emerged on Jiang Chen's face. [This girl is almost too resilient and independent. Any other girls would not be able to handle these living conditions. Especially with her charming looks, if she wanted her problems solved, a lot of people would be willing to pay 500,000 for her.]

But her attractiveness was completely undermined by her terrible attitude.

There was a hint of a moldy odor when Jiang Chen first entered the room, but the scented air freshener quickly filled his nostrils.

It was clear that Xia Shiyu used it in an attempt to solve the problem.

The room was tiny and cluttered with furniture. It was even smaller than Jiang Chen's cheap apartment. There was no TV in the living room. Only an old wooden desk with even older chairs. Maybe they would be worth something if she sold them as artifacts.

There was no air conditioning in sight either, only a fan placed in the corner of the room. The most expensive electronic was the stainless steel kettle which she had most likely brought with her when she fled from her home.

A laptop was on the table, but there was no wifi here. What would be the use of it?

He noticed that two pairs of shoes were placed neatly in front of the door. There was no way she only owned two pairs of shoes. She must have been in a rush when she escaped. Although the condition of the apartment was not the best, it did look like she spent a considerable amount of time cleaning the place.

"Sorry, it's pretty crappy here. Sit," Xia Shiyu awkwardly said. It was her first time bringing a not-so-familiar man to her place. Even for her ex, she always asked him to stop in front of her door. The idea of spending time alone with the opposite gender made her extremely uncomfortable. Perhaps it was because of her overprotective mindset that she was friendless, especially at this time, when she needed someone the most. She walked into the tiny bedroom.

Jiang Chen pulled out a chair and sat down on it. However, to his surprise, it almost made him fall. [F\*ck, the chair is missing a piece of its leg.]

Soon, Xia Shiyu walked out with rubbing alcohol and q-tips.

“Where?” Her tone was mechanical. She examined the wound as she tried to place her hand awkwardly.

“Here. Are you going to...?” Jiang Chen forced a smile. He only wanted to mock the ex-manager, but she did bring out the rubbing alcohol.

“I said I would treat it for you.” Xia Shiyu took in a deep breath as she advanced toward his face.

Jiang Chen felt uncomfortable as well. His hands wiggled back and forth not knowing where to place them.

“Don’t move.” Xia Shiyu frowned slightly and gave the restless Jiang Chen a hard stare.

“Okay.” Jiang Chen forced a smile again.

It was a delightful fragrance. The lilac aroma twirled around Jiang Chen’s nose. Her flawless neck was decorated with jewelry. Jiang Chen remembered there was a necklace when they worked



together. When she leaned forward, the light summer shirt flashed a glimpse of her beautiful cleavage. It was probably only a B, which was nothing compared to Sun Jiao's. But with her serene figure, she seemed like a delightful breeze in the summer day.

She was a goddess in looks and figure. It was quite embarrassing, but Jiang Chen did masturbate to her before.

In his memory, her hair was always tied back professionally. Today, her hair was pulled back in a ponytail which brought Jiang Chen to a memory of his past. The newly graduated Xia Shiyu was nothing like the professional office lady.

“What are you looking at?” She noticed the invasive stare which made her quite scared. But her face still displayed the same guarded and emotionless look.

“No. Nothing,” Jiang Chen awkwardly replied.

After the wound was treated, their eyes crossed.

Time stopped for a moment.

Awkwardness ensued.

“It smells very nice here. Hahaha.” Jiang Chen rubbed his head to break the silence.

Xia Shiyu zoned out momentarily. Her cheek blushed as her emotionless face smiled slightly, but her eyes looked even colder.

“It’s the scent of lilacs. I probably got it when I worked.” With a frown on her face, she quickly cleaned up and headed back into her room.

[Heart pounding fast.] She held her pumping chest as she recollected her breathing. She disappointedly looked at herself in the mirror. She didn’t know why she was acting weird.

[Heart pounding fast.] Jiang Chen also confusedly touched his chest. [There is no way I am interested in this girl.] He immediately rejected the idea and blamed the natural reaction of his hormones. Compared to an icy beauty, he preferred the energetic and lively Sun Jiao. Sun Jiao who occasionally went into her character as the queen of the wasteland while acting as a caring and heartwarming wife.

Xia Shiyu left her room moments later and interrupted Jiang Chen’s train of thoughts. She stood across from Jiang Chen, but there was no conversation between the two. Silence filled the room as the only noise was the ticking clock and their heartbeats.

“Thank you.” Xia Shiyu broke the silence first.

“No problem, I just happened to pass by.” He lied about the fact that he tried to find her today in the morning with hostile intentions but only left because he heard she left her position.

He didn't expect this stubborn girl to thank him.

"You," Xia Shiyu briefly paused as if she had something to say. She hesitated for a bit before finally asking what bothered her, "Don't you hate me?"

He was not surprised by the question. He also considered the question himself. [Do I still hate her?]

"I hated you." In the end, the paragraphs he tried to articulate in his head only turned into three short words. Jiang Chen looked at Xia Shiyu with a perplexed look.

[Then why did you save me?]

She didn't ask this question, but Jiang Chen read the unasked question in her eyes.

He hated her before. She fired him and almost made him homeless. He was not hesitant to curse her with the most malicious vows... However, that was all in the past. After he had released his anger, it was no longer an incident that bothered him. Life continued, and there was no reason to continue to despise her.

"No particular reason." Jiang Chen sighed as he shook his head. "To be frank, when I heard that you were fired, I was quite ecstatic for a moment. As you can see, the clothes I am wearing right now are purchased from that store. However, I realized that I am still too immature."

“Immature?” She mumbled the word repetitively. She was dumbfounded by Jiang Chen’s words. Her icy, cold eyes began to lose its focus.

If Jiang Chen humiliated her or even hit her, it would make this feel easier. But the man she almost single-handedly pushed to despair didn’t do anything in retaliation. He gave her a helping hand in her most desperate time.

[Why...]

“Even if I retaliated, what would I get in return? To be honest, the feeling of revenge is great. But if I see a girl get pushed to the edge of life by a group of thugs without doing anything, the guilt will overwhelm me - especially since I know you. After all, we don’t have a hatred that runs for generations. It was only a job after all. Even if you gave me the job now, I will not take it.”

It was a job after all. Compared to what Jiang Chen lost, he certainly gained a lot more. If he weren't drunk, he would have never passed the alley. He would have missed the opportunity to acquire the interdimensional bracelet.

He never knew where life would take him the next.

“Before I fired you, I thought a lot about it.” With a perplexed look, she continued, “Based on the facts, I know I am not a qualified manager.”

“You have all the abilities, but you don’t know the human heart”  
Jiang Chen smiled.

“Human heart? Do you mean psychology?”

“No no, it’s not something from the textbook. The human heart is a complicated matter. Even within a lifetime, it would be difficult to understand it all.”

They chatted as if they were close friends that hadn’t seen each other for a long time. Jiang Chen felt the calm he had been searching the entire day for.

Yes, it was incredible shopping, and eating a fancy meal, but he still felt hollow.

In this large metropolitan city, he didn’t even have a single friend he could talk with. Maybe that was what Jiang Chen was searching for that entire day. Everyone took separate path after graduation and moved on.

This tiny apartment brought him the calmness and serenity he had desperately searched for.

Maybe, this peacefulness was what life rewarded those who did good deeds.

# Chapter 21: Work for me?

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Why don't you work for me?

He stared out the window as night fell. It was getting pretty late. He peeked at the clock, and it pointed directly at 12.

At that moment, he realized there was something wrong. There were only three pairs of female shoes there, but he always thought she had a boyfriend.

"I am staying pretty late, is your friend not going to be jealous?" Jiang Chen casually asked but soon noticed the gloom on Xia Shiyu's face.

Immediately, he realized what happened. He knew someone as smart as Xia Shiyu would not borrow money from sketchy sources. Then the only option was that after she had lost her job, he loaned under her name.

That also explained why she was left helpless in this old and torn down apartment.

"Your man's a trash and a half." Jiang Chen stood up for her.

"He's not my man." Xia Shuyu replied with the same emotionless tone.

“Why don’t you go home?” Her apathetic tone made Jiang Chen quite shocked. So to avoid the awkwardness, he changed the subject.

“I don’t want to bring trouble home.” The resilience on her face touched Jiang Chen. She was definitely capable. He thought that maybe it was because upper management had a thing with her. But he was too quick to judge. For a renowned brand, the upper management was not the type to think with the lower half of the body.

“To be honest, I am impressed.” Jiang Chen said to Xia Shiyu with sincere.

“Really?” The tone of her voice was filled with self-mockery.

For some strange reason, the second she opened her mouth, Jiang Chen saw a glimpse of wretchedness in her eyes. Perhaps it was not that, perhaps it was weariness.

As a woman, after all the ups and downs she has gone through, she still stayed strong.

Jiang Chen didn’t know what would comfort her. He was not too good at comforting woman in general. Or else he wouldn’t be single for 20 years.

Silenced ensued again.

“Do you want to listen to my story?”

Jiang Chen nodded.

She told him everything that happened after she fired Jiang Chen. The store was facing sales problems, and the headquarter was questioning her ability. From a bunch of anonymous complaints to holding the notice of termination, she felt a mixture of emotions when she left the place. Unemployed, cheating, and gang harassment, she was running out of options, and she finally decided to flee from her apartment and hide there.

What pushed her from despair to hopelessness was hearing the proud voice of her parents on the other side of the phone. However, she couldn't express her sorrow to them. She could only answer against her will that she was okay, and everything was fine. Her parents were too old to accept this travesty.

Jiang Chen also felt the same heartache when he lost his job. She was not seeking sympathy; she only wanted someone to talk to because she was too tired. However, this person only showed up now.

“You are very strong. If there's anything I can do to help, feel free to call me.”

“Thanks, but I don't need sympathy.” Xia Shiyu smiled as she rubbed her teary eye.



Smiled?

Her?

Jiang Chen was stunned.

“Is there something on my face?” Xia Shiyu felt quite shy after Jiang Chen’s eyes were locked on her.

“No... But this is my first time seeing you smile.” He blankly nodded. He knew that if he looked in the mirror right now, he would look extremely foolish.

Haha, Xia Shiyu burst out in laughter. She was also stunned because she realized that she was laughing. Not only was she laughing but she was laughing joyfully.

“Well, is it that funny?” Jiang Chen pretended to cough as he awkwardly rubbed his head.

“You, are very funny.”

[Why is it in a questioning tone?] Jiang Chen rolled his eyes as he looked defeated.

“Now that I told you my story, can you tell me yours?” She rubbed her eyes. Her softened expression made her face as pristine as snow.

[She has such an adorable face, why would she remain so cold every day?] Jiang Chen murmured in his mind.

“Me? There really is not much to say. I made some money with my own business.” Jiang Chen guiltily made up an unsophisticated lie.

Xia Shiyu slightly frowned and looked unhappily at Jiang Chen. She didn’t even realize such a girly expression appeared on her face.

“Hmm? I don’t believe it.”

“Well, there is nothing I can do about it.” He opened his palms. Some secrets must be kept hidden forever. “But, I do believe you’ll be an excellent manager. Are you interested?”

This was Jiang Chen’s other consideration.

Open a company and let Xia Shiyu work for him.

Exchanging for gold is not a long term strategy. One day people will question his source of income. If the government noticed him, he would have to live on the other side of the earth. The best way was to open a company. He even thought about the name. It will be called “Futuristic Technology”!

His plan was to gather all the “garbage” from the apocalypse and introduce ground-breaking, innovative products.

iPhone, Microsoft, and Samsung will all be names of the past. Could they be as innovative as technology from 200 years later? Even the computer screen was made by full-sensory technology. If they produced the technology that only existed in sci-fi, all the consumers in the world would go insane.

This was only in the electronic devices.

Blizzards, EA, and Ubisoft would go lunatics over the virtual reality technology. Once a matured virtual reality technology debuts in the market, no one would want to play with a mouse and controller anymore.

Then it would be home appliances, cars, military tech, and even technology for space exploration! The possibilities were endless.

The reason why he chose Xia Shiyu was simple. He couldn't find anyone else, and he trusted her ability. Although they had a conflict in the past, Jiang Chen realized he forgave her quite easily. Maybe it was because she was not a bad person, or maybe it was because of how similar their experiences are.

So when Xia Shiyu hit rock bottom, Jiang Chen reached out to help her and recruited her.

“Interested?” Xia Shiyu was still unclear about what Jiang Chen

meant.

“How many years would you have to work in the flower shop to pay me back? And since you are unemployed, I just found a job for you.”

“You own the company?” Xia Shuyu looked at him questionably.

“What, I can’t? I am excited to see my ex-manager work diligently under me.” He said jokingly. But he looked quite serious.

She closed her eyes to consider the proposition for a moment. It was quite attractive to her. She didn’t have any reason to reject it.

“I accept.”

“Excellent.” Jiang Chen laughed and extended his hand. “Welcome on board, Manager Xia. You are hired by Futuristic Technology, and your starting salary will be 10,000.”

The salary was comparable to her previous job. Jiang Chen’s generosity made her feel confused. After so long, he already made this much progress in his career?

She shook Jiang Chen’s hand. The warm but coarse feeling made her slightly tremble.

“That’s a hefty salary you are paying. However, just to be clear, I

will not do any sexual favors.” Astonishingly, she was surprised she got the job.

Jiang Chen was completely stunned. He was amazed by the glimpse of charm she displayed. The icy beauty made a dirty joke.

“Haha, of course not. But the company does not condone nor prevent employees from seducing the president.” The righteous beauty was obviously no match with Jiang Chen in terms of dirty jokes. After she heard the word “seduce”, her face flushed with anger.

But to her surprise, she was more embarrassed than angry.

[What’s the reason?]

“Can I get a brief description of the company?” Known for her professionalism, she quickly recollected herself. She headed straight to business. “Futuristic Technology, the company sounds like a firm that specializes in the technology sector. What am I in charge of? Sales, or research and development? If it is R&D, although I don’t any experience in the area, I am confident that I will be familiar with the responsibilities within a month...”

“Stop, stop right here.” Jiang Chen signaled Xia Shiyu to stop talking. With her question-filled eyes fixed on Jiang Chen, he cleared his throat. “In simple term, you are the CEO. Therefore you take care of everything.” Let the secretary do everything was the way Jiang Chen imagined to be a boss He didn’t have the energy to manage people.

Xiao Shiyu's face all the sudden turned concerned. She never heard of the Futuristic Technology at all.

“Currently, the company is still in planning stage.” Jiang Chen answered the question she was worried about as if it was not a big deal at all. “Don’t you feel excited? You’ll be the Steve Jobs of China, and I will be the Bill Gates of China!”

With passion, he stated the quote that he always wanted to say. He finally had the opportunity to say it.

“ ... ”

“Wait, why do you have your phone out?”

“I am reserving a hospital bed for you.” Her look expressed which type of hospital she was sending him to written all over it.

“Wait, you...”

She grabbed her phone and convinced her to let him finish.

“If you don’t join us right now, you’ll regret it in 5 years! Just like how no one believed in Jack Ma. Wait, don’t call.” Jiang Chen calmed the almost furious Xia Shiyu with a smile. He was not talented in giving pep talks. He didn’t know how to recruit and excite people. He wanted to use what he has learned through

WeChat marketing, but it made him even more suspicious in the end.

“Simple, your position is the CEO. However, since the company doesn’t have a lot of business right now, why don’t you take care of the position of general manager as well. At this stage, I’ll pay you 10,000 a month. You don’t need to repay me with this money. I really don’t care about such a small amount of money. Maybe in the future, your salary would be far above the amount of loan. Don’t look at me like that. I am not joking. Your next task is simple. I’ll wire you 500,000 so you can incorporate the company. You don’t have to worry about what happens next. In two months, you’ll be extremely busy.”

She sighed as she stared at the Jiang Chen who was feeling great about his speech. “Are you not afraid I’ll take the money and run?”

“You are not that kind of a person,” Jiang Chen disagreed. “Also, 500,000 to learn about a person is worth it. Compared to what the company will be worth in the future.”

Since she still couldn't find a job and owed money, Xia Shiyu made up her mind and agreed.

Years later, Xia Shuyu would still be grateful when asked about this day. When media asked about how she almost rejected Jiang Chen's offer, she would just emotionally say one sentence. “Sometimes a split second decision makes a difference between a billionaire and poverty.”

“It’s late now. I’ll head back.” It was almost one in the morning.

“Mhmm.” She stood and walked Jiang Chen to the door.

“Don’t forget to send me your bank account number. I’ll prepay your July salary. You’ll get paid at the end of the month. Also, find somewhere nice to live. It’s not safe to live here, especially for a beauty like you.” The exact contract can only be made when the company is incorporated. However, Jiang Chen was not too bothered by the details. He had faith in her loyalty.

Xia Shiyu blushed when she heard Jiang Chen call her a beauty. A lot of people called her that before, but this was the first time her heart started to pump faster. She didn’t display her feminine side this time and nodded calmly.

“Ok.”

“That’s all from me. I have to leave for a couple of days, so you might not be able to reach me.” Jiang Chen turned around and left.

“Wait...”

“Hmm?” Jiang Chen turned back.

“Thank you... You looked very... handsome when...”

At Jiang Chen’s surprised look, Xia Shiyu slammed the door shut.



[This girl, is she interested in me?] Jiang Chen thought joyfully.

But, it could just be a simple thanks.

He didn't think too much of it.

She leaned behind the closed door and slowly slid onto the ground. The cold feeling of the porcelain tile pressed against her smooth leg made her mixed emotions slightly calmer.

[What happened there? Why did I say something so embarrassing...] She covered her face as she tried to hid the tingling sensation in her hands. Her lips slightly trembled.

[That was so embarrassing... I want to die... Ahhhhh!]

In “humiliation” she hid her head between her legs.

## Chapter 22: Sanya Vacation

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Sanya, located at the southern tip of Hainan Island, was also known as Lu city. It was renowned as the eastern Hawaii and the top tourist city in Han. It possessed the most stunning views of the ocean.

Beach, ocean, and bikinis. It was the haven for vacationers.

The slightly salty sea wind carried the fragrance of coconuts. Here, there was no worry about toxic gas and no concern about smog. The city welcomed tourist with the pristine sky and the aroma of nature. It was one of the cities with the best air quality in Han.

He decided to go on this journey spontaneously.

Beach shirt, sunglasses, and an empty suitcase.

A smile emerged on his face as he saw the stretch of crystal clear sky. He stood in front of the airport for a while before finally waving down a taxi. The driver diligently helped Jiang Chen with the suitcase and respectfully opened the door for him.

The excellent service was because he made a reservation at Sheraton, which was the most expensive mansion beside the beach.

The seven-day trip would cost him 220,000, which was enough

for a down payment on a house. He would have never experienced this luxury in the past. But now, his goal was to enjoy the journey. The sooner he spent all his money, the earlier he could go back. [Is Sun Jiao okay now?]

Jiang Chen began to miss his hot "personal assistant". If she were with him right now, the journey would be much more enjoyable. And Yao Yao, did she take care of herself?

He looked at the view that passed by him. Compared to the always occupied feeling in the city, the island has a more relaxed vibe.

[Maybe I'll buy an island once I have money?]

He enjoyed the beautiful scenery and thought to himself. The car soon arrived at its destination.

The Sheraton!

It was a mansion located at the southernmost tip of the island, in the dragon bay, and it was also a natural rain forest. The silver white sand extended along the shore. Coconuts and palm trees decorated the beach. Everything a beach was supposed to have existed here.

The service at a world renowned 5-star hotel was indeed stellar. The server greeted Jiang Chen as he stepped out of the car. With a smile on his face, he took Jiang Chen to his mansion.

"If you need anything, sir, please use the terminal to let us know. We'll be here immediately. We wish you have a great vacation and let Sheraton be a part of your delightful memory. With a professional and charming smile, the server passed an iPad looking tablet to Jiang Chen. All the functionality of the hotel could be controlled from this terminal.

He took a deep breath.

"WOOHOO!"

He threw off his annoying t-shirt and underwear and jumped into the hot spring.

Pooch!

Water splashed as Jiang Chen lied in the hot spring. He was savoring this moment of peace.

[How am I going to spend the next seven days?] He didn't plan anything. In his view, the purpose of travel was to relax. The goal was not to do quests here. Since he had all the money and time in the world, he was here to just have fun.

Without sunscreen, even Jiang Chen's improved condition couldn't handle direct exposure to the summer sun. He stood up from the hot spring and dried himself with a towel.

After changing into a casual outfit, he walked to the balcony. The view directly overlooked the entirety of Sheraton's beach. This mansion was the best sightseeing spot on the beach.

The beach was filled with attractive figures. Jiang Chen automatically filtered out all the dudes. Conservative southeastern beauties, blond and blue-eyed foreigners, and even exquisite Middle Eastern hotties. Some of them bathed in the sun, some of them were playing in the water, some surfed, and some were playing beach volleyball. It was busy down there.

However, he got tired of the scene quite quickly. It was boring watching someone else play. He grabbed a glass of wine and chugged it like beer. He tried to savor the noble taste of the wine, but all he tasted was a sourness.

If Sheraton's manager heard Jiang Chen complain about the wine, the manager would probably kick him out for his lack of taste.

Maybe he has seen too many crowded places in the city, and he all he wanted was peace here.

He rubbed sunscreen on himself and laid flat on a chair. The warm and cozy feeling was delightful. It felt as if every single one of his pores were being massaged. His weariness was also taken away gently by the light breeze of the sea wind.

Away from the noise, he was enjoying the southern kingdom's sunlight. There was also an occasional crashing of the waves along

the shoreline and the laughter from the beauties playing beach volleyball. The noises lightly tingled his rigid ear drums and calmed his tightened nerves. He closed his eyes and peacefully slept.

No wonder all the rich people enjoyed the beach and the ocean in the movie. Why didn't I do this before?

Jiang Chen spent his afternoon in the sun. As the sun began setting in the east, he enjoyed the orangey hue that stretched across the horizon before finally leaving the balcony.

It was already dinner time. Because of Jiang Chen's stronger body conditions, he was more sensitive to hunger.

Although he could dine-in, he decided not to. It was his first time at a five-star hotel. He wanted to explore the place. What's the point of eating take-out on vacation?

He used the tablet to read over the description of all the facilities in the hotel. It listed everything from maps to the characteristics of each restaurant. Just as he was glancing through each restaurant, the terminal vibrated. It signaled he had mail in front of his door.

Mail?

He opened the door and found a box.

It was an invitation.

"The Saudi Prince Mr. Yef... for his beloved princess... birthday party? What the hell is this?"

The most luxurious restaurant at Sheraton was hosting a dinner tonight. It invited all the celebrity and person of importance to attend. It was a birthday for a Saudi prince's princess. Jiang Chen who lived in the most expensive room obviously received an invitation.

"Hehe, since I already got the invitation, I'll see what's out there."

Jiang Chen's smiled as he displayed a glimpse of interest.

Of course, "see what's out there" was equivalent to "what was there to eat".

## Chapter 23: Upper Class

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It was a private function, so the dress code of the gathering was formal. Jiang Chen was the only one that showed up in a casual outfit. His plan was to vacation here, so he had no intention of bringing a formal suit.

A pianist performed at the front of the restaurant. The elegant piano resonated within the room. The elites from all kinds of industries mingled and bonded in search of their inner circle. Jiang Chen stood out among the others as he circled on the edge of the dinner table with plates filled with food. His primary interest was on the table stuffed with delicious treats. Networking nor dancing interested him.

[Hmm, this steak is f\*cking delicious.] He delicately chewed and nodded his head in satisfaction. He tried to act elegantly by gently rubbing the grease off of his lips. Although he was a foodie, if he didn't care about his gesture at all, he would be a peasant. Maybe security would even escort him out.

He held his wine and gazed onto the person at the center of everyone's attention. The Saudi prince was indeed remarkably wealthy. The princess looked gorgeous. Her graceful figure curved like an hourglass. Her delicate nose paired with her crystal-like eyes created a perfect elegance. The princess possessed the facial characteristics of an eastern beauty and the figures of the exquisite western woman. Her composure also foretold her sense of class to everyone around.

She didn't wear a headscarf, so she must have been from



Lebanon.

An enormous diamond, shaped like a star, decorated her flawless neck. Jiang Chen didn't know how much it would cost but based on the size, it must be worth millions.

The prince standing beside her was also handsome. Jiang Chen observed that the two protagonists were surrounded by either arms dealers to oil tycoons. There were a few Asian looking face mixed in between, but he couldn't be sure of their nationality

The rest of the elites gathered in groups. Jiang Chen saw several familiar faces. There was a renowned singer here, and the bald guy from Fast and Furious. He was surprised by the fact that so many celebrities were here as well, but he didn't have any intention of talk to them.

"Mr. Yef, why did you choose the mysterious east to celebrate this special moment with your princess."

"Haha, I am especially fond of this place. Last time I was in Hawaii, but it's quite nice here as well. There are no reporters here."

Of course, there were reporters, but they were all invited by the police to have a chat. The conversation was probably about passport documents. Regardless of how frustrated those foreign reporters were, the police didn't let them go. In this country, it was more important to make sure you complied with the legal process than report meaningless news. When the time was right,

then you could leave.

In this country, money was more useful than capitalistic countries.

Last time in Hawaii, Yef spent double the amount of money to hire gangs to take care of the situation. He also spent the same amount and bribed the cops to ignore the situation.

The complete service of the country fitted the needs of the Saudi prince well.

Because of the importance Yef placed on privacy, his friends would always take the journey to see him. Although the friendly Yef invited everyone who resided at the hotel, not everyone lived here.

Some people booked the hotel for a few nights to access this "resourceful" network. Jiang Chen was quite lucky that he booked out the most expensive hotel. He didn't know that the Saudi prince was having a party here.

"Mr. Olaf, are you interested in five oil tankers of crude oil?"

"Of course I am interested. We burn those every day. Haha, Mr. Zachof, if you would please chat with me."

"My pleasure."

A deal was made almost every minute between each conversation. Jiang Chen sighed as he couldn't believe the scene. He witnessed deals happen while eating salmon. What a bizarre idea. He even heard a few Asian billionaires talk about business, stock markets and even some private matters. Jiang Chen also heard some quite explosive headlines.

For example, a rumored engaged actress showed up at the real estate tycoon's room last night. Also, a female singer known for her pureness was at a sexual party. Jiang Chen even downloaded a few of her songs.

The news he heard shocked him, but he was not too surprised. Sexual favors were always common among the celebrity circle. If the reporters managed to sneak in, there would be unimaginable consequences. Of course, no reporters would show up.

"A5 Kobe Beef. Great stuff."

"Mhmm, these things are sure nice..." Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows and glanced at the bulky white man across from him.

"This small piece is worth 300 USD. The way you eat it makes you feel poor." The white male with short hair and a mustache smiled. He spoke fluent Mandarin which surprised Jiang Chen.

"How did you know I was Chinese?" Jiang Chen curiously asked. Chinese, Korean, and Japanese people were hard to distinguish when they stood side by side. Even Jiang Chen himself wouldn't be

able to tell.

"I have great people identifying skills. My name is Bruce Miller." He smiled and extended his hand. [Because you eat the most.] Bruce thought in his head.

He shook Bruce's hand and exchanged a friendly smile. "Jiang Chen."

[I know you are up to no good.] Jiang Chen also judged.

Instinct told Jiang Chen that this guy was not simple. The "not simple" did not refer to whether he was rich or not. Everyone here has money here. The scent of blood surrounded him. Only people who have experienced life and death possessed this unique kind of vibe. Jiang Chen was alerted. He didn't know what this guy wanted.

"Don't worry, it's great to see someone in the same trade." Bruce sensed Jiang Chen's cautious look and waved his hand.

[Oh, he thinks I'm in the same trade as him.] Jiang Chen didn't know what to say. "Mhmm? Am I that obvious?" He didn't correct him and asked in a curious tone.

"Have you not noticed that the security here is looking at you?" Bruce sipped his glass of wine and said slowly.

[Looking at me? Why are they looking at me?] Jiang Chen

glanced at the guards with their shades on. Their muscular body looked forceful in his eyes. He didn't know how Bruce noticed they were watching him through their shades. Jiang Chen also took a sip of his wine.

"Me? Mr. Bruce, I think you made a mistake. I am only an ordinary person here on vacation." Jiang Chen said in a calm tone.

After Bruce had heard Jiang Chen's words, he let out a sigh. He was a mercenary, so he usually would not be allowed to show up at a gathering like this. However, since his team was responsible for Prince Yef's security, he was granted permission. The first thing that caught his eye was Jiang Chen. The sense of blood made him extremely cautious. This guy was dangerous. He didn't have bulky muscles, but he had a peculiar feeling that if they fought in close combat, there was an 80% chance that he would lose.

If Jiang Chen heard his question, he would probably laugh and tell him that he would 100% lose. Regardless of how strong his technique was, Jiang Chen would destroy him with his strength and reflex.

He noticed that Jiang Chen was only here for the food. So he questioned his judgment. Maybe it was a colleague just here on vacation.

To better understand the situation, he exchanged opinions with his team before finally deciding to have a conversation.

"That's excellent. Enjoy your dinner sir." Bruce smiled and raised

his cup.

Bruce didn't leave right away but instead chatted with Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen was also curious about the life of the foreign mercenaries, so the conversation was quite lovely.

"That time it was in Kane. We escorted a top government military to the frontlines of the battle. We got flanked." After a couple glasses of wine, Bruce was clearly more excited. "I thought it was the Russians because they had strong fire power. So in the end, we were forced to stay in a building until the tanks arrived."

It was not a secret, so Bruce didn't hide too much. From their conversation, Jiang Chen knew that they were part of Black Water International's security team responsible for oversea businesses. Bruce was experienced in the battlefield. He was active in the Iraq war before he retired.

"Since we are just casually chatting, why don't you tell me about yourself, Mr. Jiang? I am quite curious, for I can't afford the beach mansion with my salary."

"The goal of making money is to enjoy it afterward. What would I save it for? My coffin?" Jiang Chen smiled as he answered his question. He was also on his third steak.

"My bad. If you don't feel comfortable sharing your business,

then don't worry." Bruce's fine dining etiquette didn't seem to match his history of violence.

"Oh, it's not that big of a deal. To put it in simple terms, it has to do with gold." Jiang Chen said mysteriously.

"Hmm? Do you work in South Africa? That's a good place." Bruce nodded

"No, it's in Asia." Jiang Chen shook his head. Bruce was quite surprised.

"To my knowledge, Asia is not a hotspot for a lot of business. Is there a lot of business there?" Bruce looked confused.

"That's not true. There is a lot of business near the border. We get paid in gold." Jiang Chen made up a story.

Bruce listened to the story and smiled back. He then kept his silence.

A lot of conversations are better when they are off topic, especially for a mercenary like him. There were usually two types of border businesses. Firearms or drugs. Both of them were not conversation topics suitable for the public. These types of gathering usually prepared private rooms for these matters.

These gatherings also had FBI agents lurking around. Questions too specific would be impolite in public.

The gathering safely reached its conclusion. After the Prince's romantic remark to the Princess, the elites began to depart. As Jiang Chen was preparing to leave, Bruce offered him his business card and said goodbye.

The reason why he chatted with Jiang Chen was primarily because he wanted to keep an eye on him. Since the gathering was over, he didn't need to stay there any longer.

Jiang Chen stuffed the business card into his pocket, as he would unlikely meet Bruce again. Jiang Chen didn't want to create too much attention in the modern world, but he kept the business card in case he ever needed something from Bruce.



## Chapter 24: Liu Yao

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A gathering of this caliber obviously would attract the attention of other tourists. They could only look from afar under the close watch of security. A lot of fan girls screamed when they saw the muscular Dwayne Johnson. However, the elites all left with their female companion, under the protection of their bodyguards, .

People who attended the dinner were obviously either rich or important. This became an obvious target for girls who were looking for sugar daddy. It would be life changing if they managed to create something romantic here.

The opportunity always existed. Some of the celebrities actually preferred these types of girls. There was even an event that made national news consisting of these celebrities.

Sheraton didn't make too much of an commotion over these people. They allowed pretty looking girls to enter the hotel even if they lived elsewhere.

If the place was too orderly, where would the fun be?

“Hi, handsome. Are you by yourself?” A beauty with the most pleasant smile casually flirted with Jiang Chen. She was wearing nothing but a pair of sunglasses and a simple bikini.

The elegant curves of her breasts were at least a D cup. Her delicate and thin waist matched with her long and flawless legs, and slightly curled hairstyle gave her vibe that was both pure and

graceful. She was no doubt sexy, but who knew if her breasts were real? Or if she was actually pure on the inside?

“Indeed I am alone. Is there anything I can help you with, beauty?” Jiang Chen gazed at her dazzling smile and smiled as well. He had no moral grounds to hold back. If the possibility of a one night stand presented itself, he would not resist the offer.

“Of course, I am missing a male companion to enjoy the beach with.” The beauty sensed that there was an opportunity and a confident smile appeared on her face. She strutted towards Jiang Chen and then leaned into him.

With a light but hot and seductive breathe, Jiang Chen felt a rush of desire into his abs.

“Oh? That’s perfect then. My mansion at the beach also lacks the presence of a female companion.” Jiang Chen approached the beauty’s ear and whispered.

The warm breath of air and the explosive news made the beauty gasp in shock. Sheraton’s beach mansion cost at least twenty to thirty thousand a day. When she discovered she hit the jackpot, she immediately became more enthusiastic. She hopped energetically beside Jiang Chen and grabbed him by the arm.

“Excellent, can you show me your mansion?” Her pristine eyes

portrayed her as an innocent girl, as her pair of boobs “accidentally” pressed against Jiang Chen's arm. She had a kind of pureness to her attraction.

Her soft and sweet voice made Jiang Chen want to eat her on the spot.

“My name is Jiang Chen, may I ask what your name is, beauty?” With chivalry, Jiang Chen hugged the graceful figure and smiled.

“Liu Yao. I don't know if you have watched <That Year> before, but I am the supporting actress in it.” Liu Yao seductively and gently breathed on Jiang Chen's ear's most sensitive spot and grazed her teeth against it. Her eyes were like a crest, “you can call me Yaoyao.”

Teen dramas have been quite popular in recent years. Low production costs along with high reception rates made this genre of films fill every screen across the country. Although in Jiang Chen's teenage years there was no abortion, leaving the country or someone dying made up the majority of these film's plotlines. Jiang Chen was also not necessarily interested in the unrealistic scenarios, but he still went to a movie with a university classmate he had a crush on.

Something interesting to note was that by the end of the date, Jiang Chen didn't even manage to hold the girl's hand.

“The busty but innocent looking math class representative Chen Lele? That's a shame. There were only a few seconds for such an

attractive character.” He glanced at the massive pair of boobs and smiled. He would never tell Liu Yao that he went to see the movie with a female classmate and even masturbated to it before. “I’ll call you Lele. I prefer this name better.”

The name Yaoyao belonged to an adorable girl.

Liu Yao without a clue smiled and followed Jiang Chen to the mansion at the beach.

—

When they stepped through the door, her delightful figure was immediately pressed against Jiang Chen’s body. Liu Yao proactively offered her seductive lips.

He felt her impressive breasts push up against his chest as well as her flirtatious tongue dancing in his mouth. Jiang Chen’s repressed desire was reignited.

Liu Yao was skillful in knowing a man’s sensitive spots, and she used her gentle hands to push Jiang Chen to his emotional climax.

It was a fantastic time to have sex with an experienced woman as they knew all the weaknesses. They will proactively attack those weaknesses and lead the way to happiness.

Also, responsibility was never an issue afterward.

“Lele, let’s shower together.” Jiang Chen’s heavy breathing resonated beside Liu Yao’s ear. His annoying clothing had long been removed by Liu Yao’s teasing touch.

“Student Jiang Chen, you have to be respectful.” With his warm and firm muscles, Liu Yao also felt a little wet. However, she suddenly frowned and “rejected” Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen was confused as he didn’t realize what she was doing. Though when he felt the warmth of her hands still on his body and saw her desire filled eyes, he immediately understood everything.

No wonder she is an actress. Although she was a third tier at best, her acting skills were superb.

With a smirk, Jiang Chen roughly grabbed Liu Yao and whispered into her ear, “this is not up to you, my math class representative.”

Water splashed again as the soothing hot spring became a steamy love bed.

As Lele was already in her bikini, there was no need to remove it.

Liu Yao fiercely “resisted” against Jiang Chen’s attack, but at the same accepted his waves of thrust.

In the water; beside the hot tub; on the beach chair; those two left their battle marks everywhere.

—

Afterwards.

“Did it feel nice?” Liu Yao laid comfortably on the bed like a gentle cat and gazed sweetly at Jiang Chen.

“You devil.” Jiang Chen jokingly cursed at her while he slapped her butt. His actions made her scorn.

The softness of the bed along with the soft melody whispered into his ears gently massaged his head. The occasional sea wind only made the moment more soothing.

What a time to be alive.

Jiang Chen exclaimed from the bottom of his heart.

“What do you think, student Jiang Chen, of the math class representative’s private tutor lesson? Are you satisfied?” Liu Yao gently joked, as she leaned towards Jiang Chen, with her chin resting on her palm.

It’s believed that women are more attractive from this angle.

“Extremely.” Jiang Chen gave her a warm smile and reached out to touch her delicate face.

Like fine porcelain, crafted to perfection.

“Am I beautiful?”

“You’re beautiful.” Jiang Chen answered honestly as he began to play with her fluffy hair.

“Where is your girlfriend?” Liu Yao, all of the sudden, changed the topic. A sign of ambition emerged from her gentle, watery eyes.

“In a different world.” It would be considered a different world no doubt if Sun Jiao was considered his girlfriend. Jiang Chen didn’t lie.

Except the words were interpreted differently by Liu Yao as the obvious explanation was she passed away. Jiang Chen’s identity all

the sudden changed from a wealthy man seeking for a one night stand to a successful business man that just lost the love of his life. This ignited the desire in Liu Yao's eyes.

With a slight sorrowful expression on her face, Liu Yao gently hugged Jiang Chen's head and used her soft breasts to comfort his remorse spirit.

In her eyes, Jiang Chen's silence was because of his lost.

Jiang Chen didn't bother explaining. He quietly enjoyed Liu Yao's small gestures as little Jiang Chen, who just finished a hard fought battle, began to show signs of life again.

Sensing Jiang Chen's movement, Liu Yao understandingly smiled and tapped his chest with her finger. She stopped Jiang Chen from getting up.

"Leave it to me." She enchantingly smiled and gracefully move her body before lowering her head.

After a long and tiring session, Liu Yao swallowed the fruit of victory in front Jiang Chen. She was delighted when she noticed Jiang Chen's brief excitement at the act.



“Are you feeling better now?”

“Excellent. I feel like I am about to fly.” Jiang Chen exaggerated.

“Travelling by yourself is lonely right?” She took a napkin and wiped the edge of her mouth. She then resumed to rest on the spot and innocently shook out her long and seductive legs.

“Of course. No wonder a good vacation requires a beauty.” Jiang Chen satisfyingly stretched out his limbs.

“Do you want me to always be with you?” Liu Yao touchingly gazed at Jiang Chen.

“I have seven days of vacation. I hope you’ll be with me for those seven days.” Jiang Chen euphemistically but determinedly rejected Liu Yao.

He didn’t mind sharing a memorable experience with a supporting actress from the movie, but he would never accept her as one of his own. He didn’t have any moral codes to abide by, but it didn’t mean he was willing to accept.

Liu Yao paused for a moment before she awkwardly smiled. She didn't insist. She knew too well the certainty in a man's words. She also clearly understood that Jiang Chen would accept her as his woman, she had the realization the moment she entered the acting scene.

Except, she still felt slightly at a loss.

Jiang Chen is young and powerful, which is significantly better compared to the beer-bellied movie investors. Jiang Chen's looks also appealed to her taste and were able to meet her materialistic needs. However, the reality was like what happened in the movie, Lele and the main actor didn't manage to be together.

"In the next seven days, you'll have an allowance of ten thousand dollars a day. Buy something with it. You can also use my mansion free at will." Jiang Chen softly caressed Liu Yao's face and whispered.

"Mhmm," Liu Yao closed her eyes and covered Jiang Chen's hand as she gently replied.

This amount was significantly higher than her salary, and the job was much more relaxing. There was nothing she was unsatisfied about. Jiang Chen had no weird fetishes and always treated her

with gentleness.

She thought about it before she slowly climbed on top of Jiang Chen.

If that is the case, at least for the next few days, let's enjoy this rare vacation.

# Chapter 25: Robert's Invitation

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The next day, Jiang Chen woke up when the first ray of sunshine shone into the room.

He looked at the EP. When the EP was not fully deployed, the appearance was similar to a classy but odd looking watch.

\*\*\*\*

User Name: Jiang Chen

Muscle Strength: 25

Bone Strength: 27

Reflex: 29

Brain Cell Strength: 14

\*\*\*\*

The three body conditions increased by one or two points, and that concluded the full potential of the gene vaccine. Any additional improvements would have to come from working out or more advanced medication. Sun Jiao's ridiculous numbers were the result of near death experiences that triggered more potential from the gene vaccine. Sun Jiao and Jiang Chen both used the

standard type of gene vaccine, but he could only reach her numbers in Fury mode. It was not too hard to imagine the danger she must have had to face.

He closed his EP and looked at the sleeping Liu Yao.

Jiang Chen didn't wake her up and walked onto the balcony.

He leaned against the fence and breathed in the refreshing sea wind that was blowing into his face. He poured himself a cup of wine and waited for the sunrise.

Relaxing, calming, luxurious...

"What's next? What have I not experienced?" He mumbled in deep thought.

After he had returned to this world, his mental state became more stable. The bloody scene faded from his heart, and he felt his sanity was back to normal again.

He sighed, he didn't like the taste of wine, but he still took a sip.

"It's not good for you to drink wine in the morning."

"Oh? You are awake." Jiang Chen paused slightly and turned around.

“Mhmm.” Liu Yao tidied her hair against the sea wind. She didn’t wear anything but was covered by a simple bathrobe. She looked quite graceful in the middle of the sea wind.

“Ok, why don’t you watch the sunrise with me.” He left the wine on the table beside him.

Liu Yao gracefully walked towards Jiang Chen and slightly leaned against him. The rising sun reflected a golden shadow on her beautiful face. Jiang Chen, who peaked at her, was stunned.

“Are you looking at me, or are you watching the sunrise?”

“Beauty, and the sunrise.” Jiang Chen smiled. His vision extended beyond the horizon.

“I don’t understand.”

“Hmm?” Liu Yao fixed her slightly messy hair.

“You are gorgeous and smart, but why are you not popular?” Jiang Chen cracked a smile. He saw the film <That Year>, and although it was to chase after the girl who didn’t end up liking him back, he still finished the movie.

The supporting actresses only had a few scenes to emphasize the supporting actor’s unfortunate existence. However, those scenes left deep impressions in Jiang Chen’s heart. Her acting was astonishing for a supporting actress.

“Beauties can also be unfortunate. Particularly for an unsupported person like me.” Liu Yao’s lip pursed slightly. It was a mockery of reality and a self-mockery. However, she still gazed at Jiang Chen with some expectation.

Jiang Chen didn’t continue the conversation. He saw the expectation in her eyes, but he didn’t want to respond.

Everyone has their tragedies, but that’s their story. Jiang Chen only wanted to touch the graceful and delicate chapters, not the sorrow-filled stories.

Live life to the fullest.

Even through the odd encounter with her, Jiang Chen was nobody in the crowded world.

Since it was a vacation, let’s just temporarily forget about life.

Ding.

The electronic bell disrupted Jiang Chen’s peace. He lazily turned over the iPad terminal.

“Who is this?” Jiang Chen opened the front camera. It was Bruce’s fully mustached face.

“My dear friend, did you forget about me in just one night?” Bruce’s humorously accused. His fluent Chinese always shocked Jiang Chen.

“Haha, of course not. Let me open the door for you.” Jiang Chen closed the terminal and put on his slippers.

“Your friend?” Liu Yao looked at the white male on the iPad with curiosity.

“Business partner I guess?” Jiang Chen shrugged. Liu Yao kept her mouth closed. In her eyes, Jiang Chen was an elite that attended an international gathering. It would be rude of her to ask more questioned. However, what she didn’t know was that the guy was only a mercenary, and no business would happen until later.

Jiang Chen was good at making people think too much.

“Smart People” always saved him the trouble of explaining things.

“Do you need me to leave?”

“No... but, why don’t you go check out from your hotel and put your luggage here.” Jiang Chen said with a naughty smile. “You won’t have any chances to go back.”

Jiang Chen decided it was better for Liu Yao to not be present.



These rooms always prepared extra clothes for the wealthy. However, no one bothered to wear the clothes they provided.

To Jiang Chen's surprise, there was actual business for him.

"My old friend, aren't you a bodyguard for the Saudi Prince? What brings you here?" Jiang Chen took a waft of Bruce's cigar.

"Hehe." Bruce hesitated for a moment but soon cut straight to the chase. "My ex-employer overheard our conversation yesterday. He's interested in you and wants me to make a formal introduction. "

"Oh?" Jiang Chen was caught off guard. [Does he want to hire me?] He didn't want to carry an assault rifle to a military hotspot to fight wars. He had better business to do. "I don't want to ruin my vacation here."

"I think you are misunderstanding the situation," Bruce read the uncertainty in Jiang Chen's eyes. He took a breath and then blew a ring. Then in a genuine voice, he began, "Roberts Smith is a respectable middleman. He is in the crude oil and gold business. He once hired me in Iraq. Quite a nice fellow. He came here to attend the gathering of an old customer, and he is now living in the presidential suite on the seventh floor."

"Gold?" Jiang Chen eyes lit up. [Looks like I must see him.]

## Chapter 26: The Middleman

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"Welcome, you must be Mr. Jiang. My friend from the mysterious East."

After Jiang Chen had entered the room, he saw a white male with blond curly hair approach him with an amiable smile. He used a hand gesture that he learned from one of the kungfu movies and greeted Jiang Chen.

Although he was white, Mr. Robert's face was nowhere close to white. His skin looked as coarse as sandpaper. However, his composure and clean appearance made Jiang Chen sense his respect.

"Nice to meet you, you must be Mr. Robert. Mr. Bruce introduced you to me." Jiang Chen felt a little weird but returned the same hand gesture.

To be honest, it was awkward using the foreigner's way to greet others. The idea was simply a bit confusing, but that was what happened.

"Bruce is a nice guy. He took a bullet for me in the Middle East. It was a pleasure to meet him again, and as the famous Hanproverb goes, a friend's friend is my friend. Am I right?" Mr. Robert extended his hand.

"Of course. Your Hanis remarkable." Jiang Chen held onto Mr. Robert's hand and firmly shook it as he expressed his shock.

Although, Jiang Chen didn't know if what Mr. Robert said was truly a proverb.

"Haha, of course. I always had a keen interest in this mysterious eastern kingdom. There are opportunities everywhere." Mr. Robert's eyes rested on Jiang Chen, and then he gestured gracefully. "Please come in, my friend. I have a Lafitte from 1982. I wanted to try it for a long a time."

"I can't say no to this invite."

The wine tasted different than the wine provided by the hotel. The bloody red liquid expelled an exquisite fragrance of time. Even for someone like Jiang Chen, who had no experience in wine tasting, he still tasted the difference.

The man who stood by Mr. Robert's side was as silent as a rock. However, Jiang Chen sensed the monstrous nature from his stature. He had a pair of shades on, but his protruding nose bone indicated that he was a Slav. His bear-like vibe perhaps indicated that he came from a Soviet country.

"My bodyguard, Nick Belarusian. We met in Kane. He's also a good guy and responsible for my safety." Mr. Robert noticed Jiang Chen staring. "Bruce is a good guy, but Black Water International sometimes does shady business. They are also a bit too close to the FBA, so I had to find a different partner."

Despite the conversation revolving around him, the statue-like

bodyguard did not show any reactions.

"Is your business dangerous?" Jiang Chen sat on the chair and casually changed the topic. "I heard from Bruce that you are a renowned middleman in the UA. Crude oil and gold?"

"Absolutely. Apart from the relatively safe crude oil and gold, I have to sometimes obtain firearms for my employer. If I get my hands on those, there will always be someone after my life."

Mr. Robert lit up a cigar. He offered Jiang Chen one as well. "Your country has strict gun control, which makes it feel like heaven to me. However, good times are always short lasting. I have a flight to South Africa at 3 o'clock."

"You sure you have enough time?" Jiang Chen glanced at the clock, it was 11 already.

"Don't worry," Mr. Robert waved his hand and smiled. He then sat straight up. "I am very interested in Mr. Jiang's business. Is there anything I can do to help you?"

Jiang Chen paused for a brief moment. He dusted the cigar and sat up as well.

"I hope there is no confusion here, my friend. I accidentally overheard your conversation with Bruce last night. It was an accident, but business always sprouts from occasions. I have been looking for opportunities here in the Far East, and I am still

exploring. My instinct tells me that we can be great partners."

"Hmm?" Jiang Chen didn't make a fuzz about eavesdropping. With a slight interest, he continued the conversation, "For example?"

"Mr. Jiang, businesses are paid in gold right? However, to my knowledge, your country's law prohibits the large sell-off of gold because it would attract the government's attention. Especially, gold without the proof of ownership."

"Looks like Mr. Robert is extremely knowledgeable about our country's laws. However, is there no issues with selling gold in the UA?" Jiang Chen nodded without disagreeing with his comment.

"Of course there are problems. Though in the UA, we speak with the law and with evidence, not with politics. I have a professional team to deal those kinds of issues. Even if I have a little problem with the FBA right now, I am still here chatting with you, right?" With a mysterious smile, he continued, "How I do this? Let me give you an example. I incorporated a shell company in Saudi. I received a batch of crude oil from Iran. According to the sanction, my action is against the law. However, if the crude oil is sold through my shell company in Saudi, then the crude oil will be legal to sell within the international market."

[If you already told me this, are you not afraid?] Jiang Chen immediately understood why. With such a strong bodyguard, he must have a strong security team.

He now has a clear understanding of Mr. Robert's business. This middleman has the ability to access the black market.

"It looks like we do have a partnership opportunity." Jiang Chen smiled.

"I am an honest businessman," Mr. Robert saw that his deal was made and a delighted smile appeared on his face. "I'll accept the gold regardless of the amount. As long as your gold is sold through my mining company in South Africa, it will be legal once it enters the international market. You don't have to worry about the specifics. You can just sell the gold to me. I'll take a 9% processing fee."

Jiang Chen considered it.

9% was not a lot to begin with. All of his gold had no costs associated with it. It would be okay to sell a small amount to the gold shop but if he did offer ten tons of gold, not a lot of gold shops would dare to accept it. Even if he sold it in smaller batches, there was a high chance he would be suspected. The Liu Anshan guy also gave him a weary feeling. He probably wasn't that clean either.

It's always better to be careful. Although selling gold to foreigners is considered smuggling, Mr. Robert probably has it figured out.

Mr. Robert saw that Jiang Chen was silent. He wasn't sure either if the 9% is too high. However, this business was not risk-free. The capital to purchase the gold would be a problematic amount. If the

amount was over 20 million USD, then he must take a private loan to fund the deal. The interest would not be a small number.

However, if Jiang Chen possessed a large amount of gold, he could lower the fee by a percentage.

Just as Mr. Robert was about to lower the price, Jiang Chen suddenly opened his mouth.

"No problem, but I have a condition."

Jiang Chen words surprised Mr. Robert at first, but a joyful smile ensued.

"I can guarantee the quality of the gold. It's the 24K gold you guys commonly refer to. I believe you have the expertise to determine that as well." Of course, the gold in the bank would be authentic. "However, you have to be responsible for the transportation. I will only transport the gold to a location within the country. Also, you must pay in USD, on the spot. I will take no further responsibility once the transaction is complete."

"No problem, my friend!" Mr. Robert agreed without hesitation. "Looks like we have a deal?"

"Of course, cheers." Jiang Chen gladly extended his hand.

"Cheers." Mr. Robert cheerfully held onto Jiang Chen's hand as they both stood up.

"Here's my card. If you are ready, why don't we arrange a time in the future? Also, it would be best to prepare a Swiss bank account, it is the most convenient."

"Absolutely, I wish you the best of luck."

"Can I learn a little more about your background? How much are you going to sell, Mr. Jiang? I'll have to prepare enough liquidity." Mr. Robert asked this slightly intruding question to prepare for the worst.

"Oh, there's no rush. I'll give you a call on July 15th. The amount is probably a few tons." Jiang Chen exited the room and left a stunned Mr. Robert.

His face was completely blank. He didn't even realize he dropped his expensive cigar.

A few tons?

With the current market condition, an ounce of gold traded at 1,350 USD. One ton of gold would be 43,402,500 USD. At a processing fee of 9%, he would make 10 million with just three tons of gold.

This is ridiculous. 9%?!



Easiest money of his life.

A few tons of gold?! He would have done it with 7%. How wealthy was Jiang Chen to not even negotiate. It also strengthened Mr. Robert's assumption that the gold was definitely from illegal sources.

[What kind of business is he doing? Did he rob the central bank?]

"Oh God." It took Mr. Robert a while to recollect his thoughts. Then he gasped, "Oh my, I am going to be rich."

He only made half a million selling 10,000 barrels of crude oil with the risk that the UA military may detain the shipment. However, Jiang Chen decided the fate of a billion dollar deal in a few minutes.

"Nick, do you think our friend from the Far East is reliable?" Mr. Robert murmured as if he was still dreaming. He knew Nick has no understanding of business, but he needed someone to tell him that this was not a dream.

"Sorry boss, I don't know a whole lot." Bruce expected Nick's response. He was silent, before he continued, "However, I know this man is dangerous."

"Really? Does he know martial arts?" Mr. Robert laughed at the statement. He made a funny pose as if he was Bruce Lee.

Nick stared at the pretentious boss and shook his head. He knew his boss quite well. Whenever Bruce was excited, he would always make some funny poses to express his excitement.

"From a soldier's instinct, this guy is stronger than Bruce." It was his job to ensure his safety. Therefore, he gave his honest opinion.

Mr. Robert was surprised by the comment. "He is not a merchant? No way, my instincts are usually right."

Nick hesitated for a moment before continuing, "Maybe he is a merchant, but his combat technique is quite strong. My instincts tell me that even if he can't beat me with firearms, we are a 50/50 split in close combat."

Mr. Robert took a while to process the comment. He has seen Nick's ability before. In Ukraine, when he sold firearms to the government forces under the permission of the UA government, the civil forces attacked him. Nick immediately pulled out the gun of the wounded government official and used the remaining 9 bullets to bring him back to safety. He killed more 10 civil militants during the exchange.

Now Nick is saying Jiang Chen's close combat power is comparable to his?

Mr. Robert, all of the sudden, burst into laughter.

"No wonder the Far East is a mysterious kingdom. Why don't we

head to Egypt next time? Hahaha."

No wonder Jiang Chen didn't hire any bodyguards. His prowess in fighting is enough in this gun prohibited country. However, it had nothing to do with their agreement.

Mr. Robert is an honest merchant. He always believed that honoring agreements would bring him long term returns. He never did things that killed the egg laying chicken.

Even if he saw diamonds in a refugee camp in Africa in the hand of a starving kid, he would only exchange it with candy, not bullets. After all, a bullet is much more expensive than candy.

Mr. Robert never doubted Jiang Chen's ability to provide the few ton of gold, nor did he have the ability to investigate his background on this mysterious piece of land. What is business without the proper risk?

Mr. Robert was willing to make a bet. Jiang Chen's decisive attitude was definitely backed by tons of gold.

Plus, there was nothing to gain for him in the end if it was a lie.

# Chapter 27: Enjoying Life

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Jiang Chen was delighted. He acted calm and collected during the meeting, but he had a spring in his step as soon as he walked out of the door.

Ecstatic, was the only way he could describe his mood.

He managed to sell off several tons of gold, which was something he had never imagined.

His previous plan was to separate the gold into small amounts and sell it off to gold shops. Although it was inefficient and prone to be spotted by the local gangs, it was the safest way. A large amount would attract the attention of the authority, and they may force Jiang Chen to turn all of the gold in. They are always looking for ways to make money from regular people.

What? This is your gold? How do you prove this gold belongs to you?

Of course, Jiang Chen couldn't prove it since the gold really didn't belong to him.

Jiang Chen was sure that the government would release a statement to say that even though the gold doesn't belong to the government, it doesn't belong to Jiang Chen either.

He thought he would be able to sell off a hundred million dollars

worth of gold before getting found, but now it seems like it would no longer be an issue. If this foreign friend helped him to find the means to sell, everything would be easy. He just needed to create a Swedish Bank account, and the gold worth hundreds of millions would no longer be a problem.

Transporting gold was not difficult at all. A ton of gold was only 0.5 cubic meters which only would cost half a crystal in energy to store.

When he left the main hotel building, Jiang Chen chose to return to the mansion. Liu Yao was probably still waiting for him.

He got to the front of the mansion and saw Liu Yao under the shade of the trees.

Liu Yao wasn't wearing a bikini like the first time he saw her. Instead, she changed into a beige dress with a laced floppy hat. Her presence could be felt miles away.

She knew exactly how she attracted people, with the combination of her purity and seduction.

“Why did you take so long? I am starving,” Liu Yao gave him a coquetry as she swayed her slender waist. Her coquetry didn't feel staged at all.

“Haha, I'll take you out for food.” Jiang Chen opened the mansion door, and chivalrously took over Liu Yao's bag. “What do

you want to eat? Don't be shy!"

"Yay! I want to eat at the Glacier Ocean Restaurant." Liu Yao adorably clung onto Jiang Chen's arm like a loving girlfriend.

"Ok! I'll take you there."

A bright smile appeared on her face as she was pleased with the way Jiang Chen responded. She hugged Jiang Chen's arm as they walked towards the restaurant.

Perhaps she was acting, or maybe she was just following her heart.

The division between the two was too faint to distinguish.

Glacier Ocean Restaurant is a renowned restaurant in Sheraton and extending its influence to the rest of the Sanya.

The water-themed restaurant was surrounded by the mixture of the pristine sky and the mysterious sea. Arrays of palm and coconut trees showcased nature's vibrant energy. The vast collection of wine displayed at the entrance of the hotel left all the diners dazed. Then the customers were quickly captivated by the sophistication and class of the restaurant.

The private room in the middle of the restaurant was even more intricate. The aquarium-like design transformed the dinner into a unique experience as if they were in the midst of the ocean. There

was no need for extra decorations, as the reflection of the water's waves created the perfect atmosphere.

Jiang Chen and Liu Yao sat in the private room.

“I heard the view at night is even better, but the view at noon is also remarkable.” Jiang Chen savored the fresh taste of salmon meat and took a sip from the delicious Wen Chang chicken soup. Delicacies filled the table, and he was even dazzled by all the choices.

“This Boston lobster is delicious!” Liu Yao playfully stuck out her tongue. She skillfully used her graceful finger to dissect the lobster in front of her.

“Beauty is something one can truly enjoy.” Jiang Chen picked up a piece of clam. The way Liu Yao ate was extremely pleasing to the eyes.

“Hehe, pretty right?” She pouted as she continued to struggle with the lobster.

“I was talking about the lobster.” Liu Yao’s cute look didn’t stop Jiang Chen from teasing her.

“Screw you!”

Liu Yao didn’t have a big appetite, so she chose all the light but fine dishes. The majority of the food went into Jiang Chen’s

stomach. He had an appetite comparable to two adult males.

“Looks like you are ecstatic today.” She rubbed the corner of her mouse with a napkin as she looked at Jiang Chen's lively eyes.

“Indeed, I signed a big deal.” He didn't hide anything.

“Eh? I thought it was because of me.” She joked.

With a mischievous smile, Jiang Chen approached Liu Yao. “How big do you think the deal is?”

“One million? USD?” With her red lips open, she took a sip of wine. She didn't care how much Jiang Chen made as it had nothing to do with her. However, she understood a male's ego as Jiang Chen wasn't keeping this from her. She pretended to be curious.

“One million? That's pocket change.” With his back leaned against the chair, Jiang Chen smiled.

“Pocket change?” Liu Yao shockingly stared at Jiang Chen.

“At least one hundred million,” Jiang Chen replied. He pretended it was not a big deal.

“Ahem.” Liu Yao covered her chest as she ruefully looked at Jiang Chen. She accidentally spat out her wine out.



“I can’t believe you are so skillful, this is such a pity.” Liu Yao pouted as she took another sip of wine. Jiang Chen knew what she meant by pity, but he would not change his mind.

“No way, I remember I used my real skill last night.” Jiang Chen emphasized the words “skill” as he smirkingly looked at Liu Yao’s facial expression.

Liu Yao paused slightly before she understood the meaning behind Jiang Chen’s words. Her face turned burning red like the sky at dawn.

“Pervert.”

Her gentle fist striking Jiang Chen's did not bother him at all.

After the meal, Jiang Chen took Liu Yao’s hand and strolled along the swimming pool. It was a beautifully decorated pool of water. The palm trees along the side added a sense of nature to the swimming pool. Under the white umbrella were deck chair of the same color for the tourists that needed rest.

“I thought you don’t like crowded places?” Liu Yao accompanied Jiang Chen as her crystal eyes observed his face.

“You are right, but it would be disappointing if we just stayed at the mansion. This swimming pool is a famous attraction at Sanya.”

“Oh? I thought you were someone who was always busy,” Liu Yao asked curiously.

“Busy people may not like crowded places, but I am quite pleased with this scene. For example, the blonde European beauty right there.” Jiang Chen changed the topic with a smirk.

“Does my bikini not look attractive?” Liu Yao defiantly raised her D cup chest.

“It’s not the same. Everyone is different.” Jiang Chen tried to explain his reasoning. If it were his girlfriend, he would not praise other women, but since that was not the case, it didn’t matter.

Jiang Chen’s playboy look made Liu Yao want to yell and laugh at the same time. She pouted like an attached girlfriend, as she used her finger to squeeze his waist. She controlled the force just enough so that Jiang Chen would not get hurt.

“I am a D cup Don’t you think I am bigger compared to that woman?” After teasing Jiang Chen for a moment, Liu Yao fixed her hair as she lifted her chest up again with a seductive look.

“Who knows if these are real or not?” Jiang Chen ridiculed as he sneakily touched her chest.

“Then how do you know mine are fake, and hers are real?” Liu Yao persisted the question.

“Hmm? So they are real.” Jiang Chen pretended to be happy.

In this day and age, everything could be fake. So, Jiang Chen didn't think it was real.

“Fool. You didn't notice it after touching it for so long?” Liu Yao blushed as she vexed him with her eyes rolled.

The coquettish look made Jiang Chen hard.

Liu Yao became flushed as she noticed Jiang Chen's invasive stare. Although Jiang Chen's techniques were still lacking, with some guidance and his long lasting stamina and recovery time, it was easy to enjoy the heaven like feeling.

Liu Yao, of course, didn't reject Jiang Chen's intimate invitatio.

She defiantly stared at Jiang Chen as she used a finger to hook onto his collar. Then they walked towards a secluded washroom on the first floor.

“Here?” Although it was a question, Jiang Chen's hands already grasped onto Liu Yao's thin waist.

“Pervert, I'll scream for help.” She seemingly blamed Jiang Chen with her words but then swiftly locked the door behind her.

There was not a lot of traffic in the area. Most of the people were

either in their rooms or on the beach. Since it was the washroom, there were no cameras as well.

The unique environment made Jiang Chen feel a particular kind of sensation. Liu Yao's blushing face indicated that she probably felt the same thing.

"You'll have to keep quiet," Jiang Chen smirked as he whispered into Liu Yao's ear. He grabbed her smooth legs and entered into her.

Two hours later, the two of them came out of the washroom. Liu Yao's legs felt weak as she half hanged onto Jiang Chen's shoulder.

"You pervert, couldn't you have been more gentle."

"Haha, the way you held onto the wall and covered your mouth was quite cute." Jiang Chen laughed as he dodged and grabbed onto the hands coming at him.

From a bystander, the two looked like a couple displaying affection without a care in the world.

She didn't know why, but she felt tears in her eyes.

"If I..."

"What? Why don't you tell me about it?" Jiang Chen smiled at

Liu Yao who wanted to stay something but stopped.

“It’s okay.” Liu Yao turned his face around as she flashed him a smile. The cheerful smile even dazzled Jiang Chen for a moment.

It was not because of her beauty.

That smile reminded him of his high school time.

At the naïve age, free of trouble. A time where studying hard would deserve recognition. A time where being good at basketball would receive praise.

Jiang Chen remembered that smile belonged to Chen Lele in the movie; the careless and free girl. The smile left the supporting actress with an endless amount of regret and despair.

Am I sinking into the plot? What am I thinking?

“I am a woman who loves money, and I know men like you dislike woman like me. One with no self-respect.” Liu Yao faintly opened her mouth. She still held onto Jiang Chen’s hand but walked one step ahead of him so he couldn’t see her expression.

“This is only a life choice, I never disliked you.” Jiang Chen gently answered. He didn’t lie.

“But unable to accept right?” Liu Yao suddenly turned around.

Jiang Chen noticed her eyes were slightly red.

Is she acting?

However, Jiang Chen was unwilling to change his opinion. He sighed wanting to explain himself.

“You don’t have to say anything.” Liu Yao turned around with a bright smile and pecked him on the lips. After seeing Jiang Chen’s confused look, she jumped in front of him and began walking by herself. “I know, and I understand. A girl like me is not good enough for you. I just haven’t completely given up yet.”

With her back towards him, Jiang Chen couldn’t see her expression. Liu Yao had to force a smile before she spoke again.

“What if, I mean, what if we met two years earlier? When I didn’t debut yet. Would you have fallen in love with me?”

“If I fell in love with you at that time, would you have chosen me?” Jiang Chen thought about the person who watched <That year> with him.

Too similar.

Jiang Chen's calm and direct rhetoric question made Liu Yao feel his uncertainty. She turned around as she forced another smile.

She understood what Jiang Chen meant.

“Probably not.”

An honest response.

Liu Yao somehow remembered her university time. She remembered the boy that used 99 candles to write out “Liu Yao I love you” under her dorm room window. She was moved for a brief second but still rejected him because he couldn’t provide the life she wanted. Liu Yao gave her first time to a director whose name she didn’t even want to remember. She did it in exchange for the supporting actress role. She had no regrets because she received eighty thousand dollars in pay along with a ticket into the entertainment industry.

However, at this moment, she regretted.

For some reason, in her eyes, Jiang Chen began to coincide with the boy she rejected.

If the poor Jiang Chen asked her out two years ago, she would probably not even look at him.

It was not a question of right or wrong, but only a matter of choice.

“Since this is a hard earned vacation, why think about these bothersome questions?” Jiang Chen said faintly as it disrupted Liu Yao’s thoughts.

“Mhmm you are right, let’s enjoy the bench.”

A relieved smile bloomed on Liu Yao’s face.

The smile was beautiful.

Except for a bright jewel hanging at the corner of her eye. Silently, it rolled down and mixed in with the sand.

Among the waves and tides of the southern county, it was negligible and minuscule.



# Chapter 28: The Return

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Over the last five days, the two spent every moment in joy.

Liu Yao took Jiang Chen to all the famous attractions. They did everything from surfing at Wuzhizhou Island, enjoying the sunlight at Yalong Bay, wandering along the beach, to leaving names on a couple lock. Liu Yao engraved Jiang Chen's name, but Jiang Chen left Chen Lele's name.

The happiest time was always the briefest, but it was pleasant.

Until they went their separate ways, Jiang Chen didn't see any more sorrows or tears.

"Sir, would you like a cup of coffee?" The flight attendant's gentle voice disrupted Jiang Chen's thought.

"I'll have one please."

"Ok, please wait a moment."

A cup of steamy coffee was soon in front of Jiang Chen. He stared at the rising steam and smiled.

[That was a pleasant trip after all. I wonder if I will ever meet her again.]

He thought about it some more, and an even bigger smile appeared on his face. He didn't know why he wanted to smile.

He glanced at the pristine cloud outside the window and the middle-aged professional sleeping beside him. Jiang Chen finished the still steamy cup of coffee.

It was bitter, but a little sweet.

The brief Sanya vacation came to an end. Jiang Chen walked out of the Wanghai airport with his luggage.

The noisy metropolitan.

He took in a deep breath of the smog-filled air and flagged down a taxi.

“To Bailian.”

Sitting on the passenger side, Jiang Chen took out his almost outdated Samsung phone. He was about to call Xia Shiyu when he noticed a message popped up.

Weibo?

He opened the Weibo app that he hasn't opened for a while. He was surprised to find out someone @ him.

<A pleasant trip, thank you for your company @Jiang Chen>

Along the text was also a picture of an airplane taking off. Jiang Chen noticed that it was his flight.

[This girl, she went to my terminal without telling me.] Jiang Chen smiled. They said goodbye at the airport, but he didn't expect her to be there to watch him depart.

With a bit of narcissism, Jiang Chen swiped the screen up with his finger. The comments on the bottom consisted primarily of people wondering who Jiang Chen was. To begin with, she was not a famous actress, so there were only a few comments.

He thought about for a moment before half-joking replied.

<Haha, I really enjoy your superb acting skill. How about I invest in a movie and ask you to be the female lead? : )>

<Deal. You said it!>

[Instant reply.]

“Hey man, are you on Weibo?”

“Oh? Do you have Weibo as well?” Jiang Chen asked the taxi driver.

“Of course, it is pretty fun watching people make memes online. You are looking at a celebrity’s Weibo right?”

“Hehe, yes, how do you know?” Jiang Chen curiously asked.

“There is a special symbol beside their name. Look closely.” The taxi driver skillfully guided Jiang Chen, “Though to be honest, these celebrities’ Weibo are boring. They are too busy to reply to you. You must be new on here.”

Jiang Chen smiled in agreement.

He wanted to reply <There is no way you believe my joke right?>, but that post was gone.

“What happens if a post is gone?”

“They deleted it, it's common.” The taxi driver rolled his eyes as if he was an expert.

Deleted?

[This girl.] Jiang Chen sighed. The situation was funny to him.

It’s only a movie after all, how much would it even cost?

Inside the Jade Restaurant, Jiang Chen quietly waited at the

table. His eyes lit up as soon as he saw a graceful figure approach him. He signaled for the person to come over.

“You finally appeared. You don’t even pick up your phone.” Xia Shiyu gave him a hard stare. The grin on his face made Xia Shuyu irate.

She has been taking care of the company in the past few days. She even used her own money to make sure everything could be finished on time. To ensure she completed Jiang Chen’s task, she had to find lawyers, bureaus, and banks. She even went to their future office.

However, he was nowhere to be seen. Jiang Chen left all the dirty work to her and went on a vacation by himself.

She took in a deep breath to stop an almost inevitable emotional explosion.

“Don’t be so emotional, I’ll bring you next time. Sanya is a beautiful place.” Jiang Chen grinned with no signs of guilt.

“This is your company. You have to at least show up to something. You should come with me to the bureau this afternoon. I have all the documents here. Take a look.” She placed the bag on the table and ignored Jiang Chen’s invitation.

“Thank you so much.” Jiang Chen didn’t pick up the documents. Instead, he genuinely stared at Xia Shiyu’s emotionless face.

“At least you have some conscience,” she hissed at him. Although her face still looked cold, Jiang Chen felt she was no longer angry.

“I’ll go with you in the afternoon. Let’s not talk about work. Order whatever you want, this one is on me. Oh, you paid for the fees right? The company will reimburse you for it.”

Xia Shiyu was not humble and immediately ordered a few dishes. She glanced at Jiang Chen but did not even see a slight change in his grinning face. She was frustrated.

[That was ineffective.] She thought as she didn’t manage to vent her anger.

Jiang Chen didn’t notice her intention.

He still had one hundred thousand dollars left which far exceeded his expectation.

“Is there something bothering you?” Although she kept a stern face, Jiang Chen still noticed she was slightly distracted.

“Yes, I am worried about the company’s future.” Xia Shiyu dived straight into the problem, “If our strategy is to use advanced technology, we have no way of gaining a competitive advantage as a newcomer.”

“But don’t new company have more growth opportunities?” With her concern in his mind, Jiang Chen replied.

“That’s for a company with a strong core competitive advantage.” Xia Shiyu stared at Jiang Chen, who showed no sign of concern, with a look of defeat. “Do you know technology? You probably don’t even remember calculus.”

“Is that even a question.” Jiang Chen laughed. “Who remembers that stuff after graduation. Just because I don’t understand it doesn’t mean other people don’t understand it. You don’t have to worry about research and development. I’ll give you a hint. Every company have a focus, such as game development. We can just springboard off of this idea and enter the cell phone market following our success...”

“Stop right there.” Xia Shiyu interrupted Jiang Chen’s speech. She rubbed her temples. “Cell phone games? Web games? Or Massive Multiplayer Online games on the PC end? Based on the current market condition, I recommend cell phone games. Regarding the cell phone market, it’s great that our founder has a vision for the future, but one step at a time is critical for sustainable growth.”

“Of course, so we will do it one step at a time.” He casually waved his hand. “Also, this is not only my company, but it is also your company. I’ll give you 5% stake in the company, so keep up the good work.”

It was not only until years later did Xia Shiyu realize what tremendous amount of wealth was given to her. Of course, that

was the aftermath.

In the afternoon, Jiang Chen went to the bureau with Xia Shiyu to take care of the paperwork. Xia Shiyu was indeed CEO (secretary) quality. Jiang Chen only needed to sign a couple of documents before it was approved. Xia Shiyu took care of the entire, tedious process.

Jiang Chen was extremely pleased. He didn't study business administration, so his understanding in the area was extremely limited. The best kind of president, in his ideal world, was the kind who only needed to set the direction of the company. A trustworthy CEO would take care of the rest. If he had to consider all the fine details, he would be frustrated to death.

Xia Shiyu did exceptionally well at this point. She prepared everything in advance.

They only needed a part time accountant to complete the tax process. Jiang Chen took Xia Shiyu's recommendation to hire a part-time accountant. They only needed to pay 200 dollars in salary per month. Most of the new companies did this in the early stage.

After everything was completed. It was already 5 o'clock. Jiang Chen used the opportunity to treat Xia Shiyu again before they went their separate ways. With the stable income and debt crisis being resolved, Xia Shiyu moved back to her original apartment. Jiang Chen, also, headed back to his familiar apartment.



He took his luggage and returned to his apartment.

He refreshed his Weibo while lying on his bed a couple of time and teased Liu Yao for a bit before he got back into the real business.

He had a pleasant vacation, but his return time was also approaching. Therefore, preparation was necessary.

He looked on Taobao for food. Canned food was the primary choice because of the ease of storage. He ordered two boxes of beef, pork, and fish. Then, for a balanced diet, he also purchased cans of vegetables and fruits. Finally, he bought instant noodles and crackers as well. He was not going to eat it those himself, but it would be smart to sell it.

In addition, Jiang Chen purchased a bunch of female clothing. Don't be confused, he had no weird fetishes. He ordered some for Sun Jiao and Yao Yao.

Within two days, a courier delivered the almost mountain high stacks of boxes to Jiang Chen's place. He generously took out two hundred dollar bills, and the courier happily moved the boxes for him. It's good that he didn't have any furniture, for the boxes made it impossible to maneuver through his living room.

With sandpaper in his hand, he began to work.

He removed the manufacturing data and location on the can and

threw it into the storage dimension. Although tedious, he had no other choice at this stage.

It would be better if he could directly receive shipments from the packaging companies without any pictures or logos.

The storage dimension's size grew substantially. It managed to fit the size of half a living room's worth of boxes inside. Jiang Chen guessed it had to do with the gene vaccine, and it was great news for him.

The storage of these boxes cost about two energy crystals, and it would cost the same to take it all out. There were around a couple hundred energy crystals inside the dimension, so the cost did not even slightly bother Jiang Chen.

He also purchased groceries from the supermarket. He bought an ample amount of rice, fresh vegetables, eggs, and meat. After they managed to fix the fridge in the mansion of the post-apocalyptic world, it can store plenty of food. Once they manage to move a few more fridges from the buildings outside, the food storage ability would grow exponentially.

Ideally, it would be more convenient if he had a walk-in freezer. He should check the restaurants in the post-apocalyptic world; they should be easy to repair.

Before he headed home, he remembered something. He walked out of the pet store with a hamster.

When he got home, everything was ready to go. Jiang Chen picked up his familiar backpack, but then raised his eyebrows and put it down again.

Since Sun Jiao already had a clue of what's going on, it's probably time to tell her and Yao Yao.

When they went to the Sixth Street, he didn't carry toast with him. He stored the toast in the storage dimension. Sun Jiao must have noticed it, but she didn't ask. Since she had a lot of trust in him, it was no longer necessary to keep things a secret.

[It's better to confess to her. It will be easier in the future, and I no longer need to be secretive about things.]

Jiang Chen made up his mind. He's prepared to selectively tell parts of his secret to Sun Jiao.

With the confused hamster in his hand, he sat on his bed and took a deep breath.

Apocalypse, I am back!

# Chapter 29: Eagle's Crash

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“This is Eagle-I, we are at the target area.”

“Roger, this is Eagle-II. Eagle I, open electronic life detection.”

“Roger. Opening electronic life detection.”

The aerodynamic exterior design had an external door at the back with a heavy machine gun attached. The disk-shaped turbo accelerators on both sides of the craft emitted a deafening noise as the air vibrated beneath them. Inside the vessel were soldiers fortified to the teeth, each armed with pitch-black turbo packs that held terrifying single-person heavy firearms. On the right side of the craft, Liu Ding Town's logo was drawn over traces of what seemed like scratched-out symbols.

Attack Helicopter-51. PCA equipped the amphibious attack helicopter in year 2153 to primarily serve the Southern Sea fleet as it was particularly effective in beach landings. But after the war, it became less effective.

The two black helicopters flew separated by 1000 meters and hovered above a building.

Wang Shiwu glanced at the the life detection device that displayed the unknown bacterial level outside of the armored craft. He then flanked the building outside of the helicopter, a gloomy expression cast over his face.

“This has to be the place.”

“Life form matches. The target is in the building. Eagle-I requesting permission to attack.”

“Negative.” Wang Shiwu cautiously gazed at the building. He activated the communication device on the power armor. “This is the Dark Knight Squad. We are above the target creature. The target creature information is unknown. We request missile support.”

“This is the command center, missile support approve.”

The cost of a direct invasion was too high. Wang Shiwu couldn't risk his comrades' lives without even spotting the creature. He cautiously requested missile support in hopes of exposing its body.

“Eagle-I, Eagle-II, missile will arrive in 1 minute. Please increase altitude.”

“Roger.” “Roger.”

The two helicopters began to increase their altitude to avoid friendly fire. The sunrise cast rays of yellow paths through the radiation dust. With the disgustingly greenish-yellow particles emerging from the yellow building, the entire area looked like an egg from above

[What's hidden inside the building?]

Wang Shiwu locked his eyes onto the murky yolk.

Why would Liu Ding's elite force show up 30 kilometers away from the city border? The story began with the battle meeting two days ago.

Bohai Aircraft Carrier, Command Tower, Meeting Room.

“Area coordinates (412, 151) displayed an unusual life signal. Our scientists are unable to determine the creature's identity, but the crystal energy indicator has increased to 90,141, surpassing the limit by 300. Since it is within our strike range, we have to stop it from evolving further and retrieve the crystal. I need you to take care of this thing. Do you understand?” The middle-aged man in an old PCA uniform stood and commanded from in front of the full-sensory map.

“Yes, sir!”

The uniformed soldiers barked out in unity. They wore the PCA navy seal uniform to the meeting in an organized manner.

“That is all for this meeting!”

“Yes!”

The electronic life detection device was commonly used in the wasteland. Research indicated that all life forms emitted certain life signals that could be detected over long distances through emissions. It had been used as a tracking device during the war and after it, a rescue aid. In the current apocalypse, it became a civilian equipment.

The unit detected not only humans but also any life signal that could be recorded on the radar life electronic screen. The life signal was proportional to the energy of the creature. Mutant creatures had a higher life signal than humans. The advanced ability to calculate a mutant creature's crystal energy had only been completed after the war and was possessed by the majority of the larger survival bases.

After recording any unusual life signal, the survival bases in the vicinity often chose to attack the creature as it was extremely dangerous to let mutant creatures evolve. Unfortunately, there was always the possibility of strange creatures forming since all mutations were spontaneous.

Evolutionary pathways that once took thousands of years could take three days in a nuclear crater. The evolved creature could be a harmless bug or a colossal monster.

Any creature with over 300 crystals were considered extremely dangerous.

But it did not mean they were strong.

Compared to the ones with 40 to 300 crystals, the extremely dangerous mutant creatures were easier to deal with. A 100-pound human for example, would have a difficult time beating someone who was 200 pounds since they were not in the same category. But what about someone weighing 500 pounds or 1,000 pounds? They would be considered disabled, unable to maintain basic life functions.

Similarly, mutant creatures with over 300 energy crystals were considered “disabled.” Under the influence of radiation and other factors, the continuous mutation endlessly expanded the life energy, but that did not necessarily equal strong destructive ability. Once anything surpassed a limit, it would be a hindrance.

Liu Ding Town had similar strike operations in the past where their target was an unknown creature with 110,000 crystal energy.

Once the squad had arrived, they were met with a crowd of corpse-eating creatures and a massive half-eaten meatball.

A meatball that filled the entire street.

The clueless squad had to call missile support to blow the meatball into pieces. With an energy detector they were able to locate the meter-tall crystal and transport it back. The rest of the meatball attracted an endless number of corpse-eating creatures in the vicinity, so it was impossible to retrieve. It was unfortunate because it would have been an excellent source of nutrient supply.

These excessively mutated creatures had no fighting power most



of the time. For economic reasons, they were much easier to deal with compared to Death Claws or Roshan.

With this reason, selfish commanders were spurred into action to destroy the mutant creatures.

Wang Shiwu was dealing with such a creature.

Although the soldiers began to whisper about finishing the mission and taking a shower since the power armors were extremely humid to wear,.Wang Shiwu felt something was off and cautiously followed the missile support procedure.

The Eagle-I in the front opened the radar to provide exact location for the missile at Liuding.

“Prepare for missile launch, raise the barrel! Quick!” A few people in work uniforms hustled. They controlled the equipment around the launch pad as a ten-meter-long barrel emerged from the aircraft carrier.

The sleek-looking barrel had a famous name—electromagnetic gun.

“Distance between two points are 310,203 meters, detecting the thickness of the target. Use a 10-kilogram missile, raise to 47 degrees, and adjust power setting.”

The technician on deck was changing the settings with a tablet

computer. Bohai's fire control system had originally been destroyed by an electromagnetic pulse during the war. These fixed gun barrels were later fixed by survivors and connected to nearby terminals to be controlled at close distance.

The technician pressed <Fire>.

A blue spark filled the barrel as the high-density electricity generated a short but deafening noise.

There was no explosion.

There was only the initial noise of the missile breaking the sound barrier. A trail of light blue casted across the horizon.

The force of the electromagnetic ripple pushed the barrel slightly backward. Steam began to rise as the liquid cooling system activated. A light flashed from the back of the aircraft before fading into the endless ocean.

The flat-headed missile flew across the sky. The remaining electricity from the initial firing maintained the internal detonation device and also created a vacuum around the missile.

As it approached the target, the vacuum layer disintegrated.

The speed coating began to melt as the missile expanded.

Followed by a red trail, the cylindrical missile hit the building like an iron fist.

The deafening explosion spread as the missile penetrated the building as if it was paper.

The building crumpled under the force of explosion, a hollow space left behind by the missile.

“Direct hit. Great shooting.”

“Target spotted. Wait! What is that! Dammit.”

“Eagle-II, report the situation. Eagle-I...”

“Crashing! Crashing! Please send assistance.” Sounds of chaos.

From the explosion, a giant emerged. No, to be accurate, it was a giant gun.

A dark red energy began to focus before ejecting a beam.

The red ray cast a straight line across the sky.

It didn't directly hit any helicopters, but it rendered all electronic devices in the area useless.

<Warning! EMP strike>

The power armor's EMP resistors opened suddenly, but all the devices suffered different degrees of damage before they were triggered.

Because of the EMP resistance, all communication signals were blocked.

“Fuck! EMP! Jump!” Wang Shiwu roared into the intercom. In the rapidly plummeting craft he managed to regain his foothold. With heavy steps, he walked to the door and jumped out.

Due to the power armor's sophisticated design, it was only momentarily disabled before all functionality returned. The two helicopters, however, did not have the same fate as the EMP instantaneously destroyed all electronic devices aboard.

Wang Shiwu gaped at the giant red barrel.

[What the hell is this? A creature that can emit EMPs? Destroyed the helicopter without even directly hitting target.]

<Landing device activated.>

After he read the letters in his helmet, Wang Shiwu let out a sigh of relief.

Cracks emerged from his knees, waist and shoulder as the small turbo engine appeared under the metal surface. Wang Shifu felt a sudden jostle before he finally regained control.

The soldiers began to land on the ground.

“Mutation virus, concentration level 97. Dammit, what is this goddamn thing?” His comrade spoke through the intercom.

“Stay alert! Make sure everything is sealed. These floating viruses are giving me a bad feeling.” Wang Shiwu checked the air filtration device. These viruses covered the filter in minutes.

The concentration was so high they were almost in chunks. The greenish-yellow appearance made their stomachs clench in disgust.

[Should we evade first?] The thought crossed his mind before he decided that he must figure out the terrifying barrel’s origin.

The helicopters were already destroyed. Even if Liu Ding sent support, it would be extremely dangerous.

“Be cautious of filter status, prepare for attack!”

“Roger.”

In case anything happened, Wang Shiwu cautiously recorded the picture of the battlefield and sent it to the command center. He

grabbed the machine gun from his back and pushed forward.

There was no response from the command center. The virus could block radio communication?

Probable, since the ray created an EMP effect, so the virus definitely had something to do with it.

No, this was still too odd!

Normally these extremely dangerous creatures would attract other mutated creatures to feast on, but there were no rats to be seen in the area.

It was peculiar!

Wang Shiwu was drenched in sweat before he heard the screams of his comrades.

“Above us! What the hell is this?!”

Wang Shiwu immediately looked up. Energy began to fill the red biological cannon once more.

There was nothing in the sky. What was this thing shooting at?

“Fire! Immediately!”

Without any time to think, Wang Shiwu ordered the attack with his gut feeling.

Twelve power-armored soldiers focused fire on the red cannon. The bullets shot out in clusters. No one knew if it would do anything, but there were no other solutions.

Five hundred meters was the effective range of machine guns. The spark from the bullets cast a glow on each of the vicious faces as the rapidly rotating barrels unleashed its firepower.

Suddenly, the half-building-tall cannon contracted. It was no longer charging.

Wang Shiwu was surprised that their bullets were effective against this creature.

But they were proven wrong as another explanation presented itself—the energy had been filled to the maximum.

With terrified expressions, they watched as the cannon exploded.

The red flash submerged the entire area in shockwaves that emitted across the radius of explosion. Silence ensued.

A few red-colored “meatballs” were propelled into the distance with the help of the explosion.

“Eagle-1, Eagle-II, Dark Knight Offline.”

“Life signal is changing! Target is dividing!”

The commander’s face had gloom written all over it. His hawkish eyes stared at the full-sensory screen in the air.

The 90141 crystal energy symbol disappeared and was replaced by 12 unevenly distributed energy life forms.

The mission had failed.

The commander was not saddened by the loss of the 12 combatants and 4 pilots. Under their virtual reality training program, it was easy to produce these types of talents.

But the two attack helicopters and the twelve sets of MAX-I Power Armors cost a total of 220,000 energy crystals.

This was a disaster.

As to how the mutant creatures would impact the wasteland? The future is unknown.



# Chapter 30: Back Home

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[Apocalypse, I'm back.]

The familiar but grimy air occupied Jiang Chen's nostrils as he stepped back onto ground. He took in a slow, long breath and looked at his surroundings—the abandoned cars, cracked roads, collapsed buildings, and the mindless zombies.

This was the place he had left.

He glanced at the cage in his hand where the cute but ignorant hamster lied silently in the cage. Jiang Chen poked its soft belly only to confirm that it had passed away. He let out a sigh.

The nut had been its last dinner.

The idea of traveling with another human was unrealistic for now. Jiang Chen felt a little upset.

He followed the familiar street. Jiang Chen was careful not to disturb the powerless zombies that wandered the street as he approached the mansion.

During the day, the zombies were not frightening at all. He would even go so far as to describe them as harmless. But once night settled, even the nearly invincible Death Claw would have to think twice before entering a zombie-filled street. Without the limitation of sunshine, the zombies were as crazy as someone on

drugs. They utilized every single mutated cell in their body to chase anything alive.

The mansion looked the same, but the iron gate was reinforced with steel wires. Sun Jiao must have done this while he was gone.

He walked up to ring the doorbell. Soon after, he heard steps from inside before the iron gate was flung open.

.

A graceful figure crashed into his chest. Jiang Chen anticipated the hug with both his arms extended. He welcomed the warmth he had longed for since he had left.

A wet sensation covered his lips.

"You're finally back." She gasped to gather her breath as she ruefully looked at Jiang Chen.

"I missed you dearly, my honey." Jiang Chen slapped the firm butt as a grin appeared on his face.

"Come in."

Jiang Chen stepped into the mansion as Sun Jiao skillfully locked the gate behind her.

He noticed that though it looked the same from the outside, the mansion's interior had been upgraded. The small decorative forest was chopped down to create watchtowers by the wall that were equipped with barbed wires and lined with hidden trenches. Even the mansion building itself was reinforced with the windows fitted with steel bars.

"What did you do to my mansion?" A bitter smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face. [This is no longer a mansion anymore, it's a fortress.]

"It is going to be safer this way," Sun Jiao proudly said. "The mansion wasn't protected at all before. I gathered some materials from the area and reinforced the place."

"I think anyone would notice if we didn't do anything." Jiang Chen sighed.

"But this is our home after all. We can't pretend that no one lives here. There will be survivors that notice this place eventually and spread the news."

"You're right. Thank you." Jiang Chen realized he had underestimated the situation and how crucial the problem was.

In the apocalypse, zombies were not natural protection. They were pretty much decoration during the day time. The survivors were not the friendliest people either. The absolute neutral Sixth Street was considered to be the most sympathetic force on the wasteland. If people discovered that there was food here without

any protection, floods of people would rush to this place. Regardless of Sun Jiao's strength, there was no way she could guarantee the safety of this place.

The most dangerous creature in the apocalypse weren't the zombies but the humans.

"But why did you break the marble statues at the front door?" Jiang Chen directed a pained gaze at the mansion. The mansion had been luxurious before, but now it had no aesthetics whatsoever.

"It occupied too much space. There was no need for cover within the wall. It would just prevent me from shooting intruders," Sun Jiao reasoned with him.

[Okay fine, you are right.] Jiang Chen sighed and accepted the idea.

He pulled open the mansion's security door.

"Where's Yao Yao?"

"That girl missed you a lot too." Sun Jiao glanced at Jiang Chen with a puzzled look. She fixed his collar for him. "Go to her room. She's been tinkering around with some small equipment to help you out."

"Mhmm." Jiang Chen nodded and walked to Yao Yao's room.

He slowly pushed open the wooden door, the hinges squeaking loudly. The room was dark. If not the rhythmic breath, he would have thought the room was empty.

[This girl, is she still in bed?]

Jiang Chen could not help but smile. He knew too well that this timid girl was always a bit dizzy in the morning due to her malnourished body.

A light, metallic scent filled the room which made Jiang Chen sniff the air. The delicate wooden desk most likely once belonged to an equally adorable girl, but the table now was filled with electronic equipment and gadgets. The full-sensory computer Jiang Chen had purchased for her was on it as well as some other unknown devices. There was a silicon board that looked as though it had come straight out of a science fiction novel on the table corner, but half of it was broken. The exposed wires were fused to another piece of circuit board.

Although he was curious, he didn't have the bad habit of touching other people's possessions without permission.

He moved his feet only to feel an obstructive force. He picked up a programming book full of professional terms and notes, reminding Jiang Chen of the "study gods" back in university.

Although he passed his computer level two examination [1], he did not understand the book contents at all.

[Is this a more straightforward and concise programming language?]

Yao Yao curled under her bed sheet as if in a sweet dream. She looked like a cute squirrel and her slightly pouted mouth like soft candies. Her hands hidden in front of her chest gave Jiang Chen a strong desire to protect her.

[Looks like she's been eating well.] Jiang Chen knelt down and indulgently rubbed her soft hair. Although the room was dark, her slightly chubbier face indicated her improved body condition. The gentle and soft snores made Jiang Chen not want to disturb her sweet dream.

But he really wanted to hug her.

"Yao Yao, Yao Yao," Jiang Chen lightly called.

"Huu... Heehee." Yao Yao dazedly rubbed her eyes as she sat up. With her sleepy eyes, she stared at Jiang Chen and smiled.

Then like a koala, she wrapped her arms around Jiang Chen's neck and closed her eyes again.

"Hehe, big brother, don't leave anymore. Yao Yao has been trying very hard. Yao Yao is excellent now." She murmured the words before it turned into a light snore again.

[This girl, did you mistake me for a pillow again.] Jiang Chen was about to wake her up when he saw the dark circles around her eyes illuminated by the dim lighting from under the window curtain.

He thought about her murmured words and felt a bit teary.

"Yao Yao is good. Sleep for a bit more." He placed the sleeping Yao Yao on the bed again and tucked her in.

He leaned down and gently kissed her soft forehead.

As if dreaming about the sweetest thing in the world, a joyful smile appeared on her face. The slightly quirked lips had a silver string attached to it.

Jiang Chen left the room and closed the door.

"Did you eat her?" Sun Jiao watched with a mocking gaze as Jiang Chen came down the stairs.

"Am I a monster or what?" He rolled his eyes and sat across from her.

"Yao Yao," Sun Jiao hesitated, but she made up her mind and said, "Yao Yao... she really cares about you. She's been studying computer-related knowledge for the past few days and even asked me to bring her a couple of books from the library. I don't know if what I did is correct. She's been extremely dedicated. Maybe she wants you to notice her, and this is her way of expressing her

emotion to you. "

Sun Jiao was adjusting the way she phrased her words to correctly express the intention behind the conversation.

"I... thank you."

"Only thank you?"

"But only, you are part of my family." Jiang Chen made up this mind and solemnly looked her in the eyes.

She suddenly climbed onto the table and grabbed him by the collar. In front of Jiang Chen's shocked eyes, she laughed.

"You mean, you're going to eat her as well?"

"That's brotherly love. What do you want it to be?" Jiang Chen looked at the suspicious Sun Jiao. Her unexpected actions made her difficult to figure out.

"Oh? I can see that she likes you as more than a brother."

Jiang Chen became silent.

"Don't you want to say something?"



"Can't you let me go first?"

"No, what if you disappeared again?" Tears suddenly rolled out from Sun Jiao's eyes. It made Jiang Chen frantic although he didn't know why. What made this audacious girl cry?

"I won't disappear, honey." Jiang Chen said with a bitter smile. He reached out his hands to hug her, but she blocked him.

"Who knows? You have girls on the other side, right?" The gaze Sun Jiao used to stare at him startled Jiang Chen.

"Eh, why are you asking this?" Jiang Chen dodged her eyes.

"Yes or no." Sun Jiao did not give Jiang Chen the chance to avoid the topic.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath and honestly answered, "Yes!"

Prepared to be tied down by this wild girl, Jiang Chen was surprised when she withdrew her hand from his collar.

"You are an honest guy." Sun Jiao didn't get off the table. She half kneeled and looked into Jiang Chen's eyes.

[She smiled? Why is she smiling?]

Jiang Chen had a strange look on his face. " I am honest to my woman."

[There is no reason to lie at all.]

"So, I am fortunate to be your woman then," Sun Jiao teased him.

"If you don't want to be, I won't force you." The complexion on his face gave away his anxious thoughts.

"..." Sun Jiao had the same expression. She gently bit her lips. "Of course I want to be, but I am a bit angry at the fact that you ditched me here to find another woman."

"I'm sorry." Jiang Chen silently lowered his head but after a pause, looked up again. He carefully met her eyes. "Although whatever I say will not make the situation better, if there's anything I can do to make up it to you, I can do it."

"Really? Anything?" Sun Jiao mischievously examined Jiang Chen's face.

"Mhmm."

"Okay then, let's start."

"Hmm?"

Before Jiang Chen could gather his thoughts, Sun Jiao had already made her move with the agility of a cat. Jiang Chen had no chance to react before he was tied down to the chair.

Sun Jiao stepped on Jiang Chen's armrest, giving him flashbacks of when they first met.

"I, I mean."

"What did you say?" Sun Jiao acted like she didn't hear him and put her head closer. Jiang Chen now realized that she had changed into something else when she went upstairs, switching from her tracksuit into an attractive shirt.

It was his first time seeing Sun Jiao wear stockings.

He thought about the clothes he had bought for them and realized clothing after the apocalypse was not an issue as there were stores everywhere.

"No, nothing, this rope just looks familiar," Jiang Chen said with a bitter smile.

"Hehe, then let me show you again," she whispered, her red lips grinning wickedly, "how great I am."

[1] Computer Level Two examination is a certificate you can acquire for computer proficiency

# Chapter 31: Family Meeting?

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That was incredibly awkward.

Yao Yao just came downstairs and saw the embarrassing intimacy.

She stood at the edge of the stairs with a blushing face, her mouth slightly open as she didn't know what to do.

Passion overtook the two of them for that brief intimate moment, but it was still too crazy to have such a seductive scene in the living room, especially when they weren't alone. They selectively forgot about the existence of other people under the same roof though it was fun while it lasted.

Sun Jiao fled the scene of the crime, embarrassed by what just happened. She wanted to dig a hole for herself and also for Jiang Chen after what Yao Yao just saw.

But when she escaped, she didn't untie the ropes around Jiang Chen. With her skillful technique and the rope's quality, it was impossible to break it no matter how hard he tried.

"...Hi."

"Brother..." She was ecstatic to see him again, but the mood wasn't exactly right to hug him as her face was still blushing red with the image in her head.

"Yao Yao, can you... can you help me untie this?" Jiang Chen ditched any honor he had and pleaded for Yao Yao's help. Except the problem was that his pants were still dropped to his knees and exposed a certain part.

[Ah! I am going to be embarrassed to death!]

"Mhmm." Yao Yao's face was burning. She kept her head down because she was curious but at the same time, she was too afraid to approach him.

Because of her nervousness, the pair of delicate hands were unable to untie the ropes despite several desperate attempts.

"Is it good?" Jiang Chen asked awkwardly.

"Gulp." It was the sound of swallowing.

"Mhmm?"

"No, nothing! It's almost done!" Her anxiousness made her suddenly raise her voice. Although she said she almost loosened it, Jiang Chen did not feel the slightest sign of relief.

Yao Yao raised her lips in a slight grimace. When she peeked at Jiang Chen, she got scared because of his voice and accidentally bit her tongue.

She shyly glanced at the part exposed and out in the open. She felt her heart rate increase for some strange reason. She knew what it was, but it was her first time seeing one with her own eyes.

[It's so big... Is it even possible to put it in...]

Yao Yao's thoughts wandered as she tried to recollect herself. Her face blushed while her fingers struggled to untie the rope.

"Sun Jiao, come out, please spare me!" He wanted to laugh and weep at the same time as he yelled out for help.

He knew she would be laughing at this point. Her devil-like personality would not simply let him go scot-free.

If Yao Yao's hands continued to caress him any longer, Jiang Chen would be even more ashamed.

Just as Jiang Chen expected, Sun Jiao had already dressed, hiding behind the kitchen door. She was peeping through the cracked-open door and laughing hysterically at the blushing Yao Yao and the awkward Jiang Chen.

[This feels great!]

But she knew it wouldn't be okay to cross the line. Sun Jiao pouted as she opened the door to untie Jiang Chen.

The reason why she allowed it was one of her considerations. She had a partial understanding of his secret, and it made Sun Jiao feel threatened. She didn't care how many mistresses he had and knew that there would be plenty of them in the other world. But what frightened her most was the possibility of Jiang Chen disappearing from her life forever and she being unable to pursue him. One world was the dangerous apocalypse while the other was a food-filled heaven. If she had a choice, she would not live here at all. If Jiang Chen gained someone else that he loved in the other world... she was too afraid to keep thinking.

She had fallen in love with him.

So she used a little trick of hers to drag Yao Yao with her. Although her growth was delayed in the hibernation chamber, she had already hit puberty. Sun Jiao didn't believe that Yao Yao, who has such strong feelings towards Jiang Chen, would remain innocent after this seductive scene. Once the idea was planted in her head, there would always be opportunities in the future.

Yao Yao was still naive. A simple kiss was not enough to keep his heart here. If one person was not enough to attract him, two people would be.

Sun Jiao thought about this while she was away from the scene. She would do everything to keep him here.

So she had to create some relationship entanglement for him to remember.

A devil-like smile appeared on her face again.

"I am here! Just wait, hehe."

"Dam\*it, I know you're hiding over there! You were laughing right? You must have been laughing!"

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"I have something important I want to talk to you guys about." Jiang Chen had dressed again and rotated his sore wrist. He looked at the still blushing Yao Yao and the shameless Sun Jiao as he suppressed his awkwardness from what just happened. He spoke in a serious tone, however, that made Sun Jiao's grin fade away. She gently nodded, which was a rare expression to appear on her face, making Jiang Chen a little surprised.

Yao Yao lowered her head and prepared to go back to her room but Jiang Chen grabbed her hand.

"Mhmm!?" Yao Yao jumped like a startled rabbit. She was too shy to look Jiang Chen in the eyes.

[I am so embarrassed.]

Jiang Chen gave Sun Jiao a hard stare, but she shamelessly looked away.



"I, I, I'll go back to my room."

"No, you are my family as well." Jiang Chen gently patted her head. He had long decided this on the day she saved him.

If it were not for Yao Yao's courage, Sun Jiao and he would have become food for the cannibals... or at least he would be.

"Let me take this off for you." His heart melted as he looked at Yao Yao who was enjoying this intimate moment. Jiang Chen reached for the electronic bracelet.

For a while now, he wanted to take this thing off her because she had never been a slave to him.

"No." Yao Yao tenderly grasped Jiang Chen's hand with both of hers. "I want to be a girl... special only to big brother."

[Special?]

Jiang Chen was puzzled by the idea, not understanding her meaning.

But Yao Yao's face turned burning hot again, not saying another word.

"Ahem, is it okay for you guys to display your affection in front of

me?" Sun Jiao said with her eyes narrowed.

[It's okay to say Yao Yao is yours, but it is not okay to publicly display your affection in front of me.] This was what was going through Sun Jiao's mind. [I refuse to allow this.] She began to grind her teeth subconsciously.

Jiang Chen felt the devil's stare as he uncontrollably shivered.

"Okay!" Startled like a rabbit again, Yao Yao backed away. Sun Jiao never bullied her, but she had always been afraid of her.

"Don't you have something important to say? Go ahead and say it now." Sun Jiao let out a sigh and cleared her mind.

Jiang Chen's face turned serious again. He sat Yao Yao down again before he walked to the middle of the living room.

Yao Yao confusedly watched Jiang Chen's actions. Sun Jiao seemed to already have a guess as she propped her chin on her hand while waiting for his explanation.

"I, I am from a different world."

Although she was mentally prepared, she was still shocked when Jiang Chen said it with his mouth. Yao Yao was completely stunned.

"Let me explain." Jiang Chen sighed as he extended his left hand.

The food and supplies inside the storage dimension emerged in the middle of the room. There were no special effects, only the sudden appearance of all the canned foods, vegetables, and rice as if fantasy had just become reality.

This shocked Sun Jiao completely while Yao Yao was already mindblown.

He scratched the back of his head in front of the two dumbfounded girls.

"I haven't explained anything yet. Why are you guys so shocked?"

"Brother... are you an immortal?" Yao Yao was the first one to regain her senses. Her eyes were filled with admiration as she stared with awe at Jiang Chen.

[To be honest, it feels great to be idolized by a naive, young girl.]

"Ahem, no. These things did not appear from thin air. How should I explain this... From my world, it is very easy to exchange for these goods with gold."

"So, big brother is from a parallel dimension that's before the war?" Yao Yao unknowingly nodded her head. She spent her childhood before the war, so she remembered the prosperity in the earlier times.

"Smart. That sums it up nicely." Jiang Chen praised Yao Yao and gave her a thumbs up. She explained everything he was troubled about in one sentence.

"...This, this much?" Sun Jiao grew up in the survival base so without much experience, she was completely stunned.

Jiang Chen couldn't stop himself from laughing at the dumbfounded Sun Jiao.

Jiang Chen briefly explained his origin and comforted away the worries of the two girls about whether he would suddenly disappear. When Sun Jiao asked about the possibility of interdimensional travel with someone else, an anxious look appeared on Yao Yao's face, but Jiang Chen had to let them down as he took out the cage with the dead hamster. He didn't explain, only leaving it on the table. The two girls were briefly silent before they understood.

"Interdimensional travel is already magical. If it was possible to bring a creature with you, the world would not be the same anymore." Sun Jiao forced a bitter smile as she shook her head. She tiredly fell onto the table.

"Yes... There are mutated cells everywhere in this world. Only humans with some resistance can prevent mutating into zombies. If big brother brought people over, the mutation could spread in the other world as well." Yao Yao gave a more serious consideration that left Jiang Chen drenched in cold sweat.

[True... The mutation viruses are everywhere. If I bring it back to the other world...]

He quivered at the idea. He was inconsiderate of the situation as his mind was only filled with how to make money. He never considered a critical issue like this.

If not for the interdimensional bracelet's ability to terminate all life, the other world would be complete chaos.

He didn't know the principle behind it. Maybe it would be helpful to dissect that hamster? But he didn't probe too deeply into that thought.

"Let's not talk about this anymore. Since you're all mine, I have an obligation to provide a better life for you." Jiang Chen's words made both Sun Jiao and Yao Yao blush. "I brought a lot of supplies back, and now we need more fridge space to store these supplies. It'd be even better if had access to freezers as well. There are also some easy to store canned foods and preserved crackers in there. I plan to exchange these for crystals and purchase some equipment to fortify our mansion."

Sun Jiao nodded.

"Mhm, the preserved crackers sell at around one crystal per piece. We don't need to go to the Sixth Street to exchange it either since there are plenty of community-sized survivor camps around here. Although I've reinforced the mansion, the defense is clearly

not enough. It'd be better if we could exchange for some firearms and weapons."

Jiang Chen briefly considered it. "Okay, let's make a list of all the items we need and make all of our purchases on one trip. Also, I think it's safer to go to the Sixth Street. The smaller survivor camps are not that trustworthy."

Despite their reinforced mansion, there were not enough people here. Sun Jiao alone would not be able to defend this place. If the food caught the other survivors' attention, those poor, starving refugees could become gun-wielding bandits the next second.

The absolute neutrality that the Sixth Street prided themselves on meant that they kept a clear name on the wasteland to foster their growth into a giant.

"You're right... but the Hui Zhong Mercenaries are going to be looking for us there." Sun Jiao explained her concerns. They lost an entire raid team to Jiang Chen last time. It would be a bloodbath the next time they encountered the mercenaries.

"Don't be afraid." Jiang Chen smiled. "It only takes me two seconds to escape the danger."

After he finished his sentence, Jiang Chen disappeared from their visions, and reappeared the next second.

"Fu\*k. If I do it too fast, it has its problems." Jiang Chen lost his

balance and almost fell trying to hold on to the chair.

There were some consequences to using this ability back-to-back, such as brief dizziness.

"You, you just...?"

"Yes, I went and came back from the peaceful world." Jiang Chen covered his dizzied head and explained.

Since he already admitted his secret, he didn't need to hide his ability in the future.

One crystal of energy was nothing to him. It was only a piece of preserved crackers after all.

"This is incredible," Yao Yao exclaimed in disbelief. Sun Jiao blankly nodded.

"The danger of the sewer system is already eliminated." He tried not to remember the scene. "Because of this, I can go by myself to the Sixth Street and bring the supplies in the storage dimension."

"I'm still worried." Sun Jiao nervously looked at Jiang Chen.

"You have to take care of our home. We don't have enough of a workforce here. How about I buy some people this time."

"Such as buying a few more cute girls?" Sun Jiao gave him a dangerous look.

Yao Yao also pouted at the idea but couldn't say anything to change his mind. After all, Jiang Chen purchased her.

"What do you think I am? A sex addict?" Jiang Chen ruefully smiled as he rubbed his nose. "There's no way you can defend this mansion by yourself. Also, I need some people with unique talents."

There were treasures everywhere on the wasteland, including the people that couldn't use their unique talents here. Jiang Chen could easily use their ability and generate a fortune for his Futuristic Technology.

"What about me? I can learn. You don't want me anymore?" Surprised, Yao Yao approached him with teary eyes.

"How could that happen?" He rubbed her puffy hair gently. "I don't want you working so hard. You already help me a lot. Also, don't stay up anymore. You need your sleep."

"Mhmm." Yao Yao joyfully hummed at Jiang Chen's head rub and immediately forgot her concern.

"Since you said it, what if you bring another girl back this time?" Sun Jiao was not as easy to fool as Yao Yao.



"I swear to God," he said while raising his hand before she doubtfully let it go.

Sun Jiao's concern was unnecessary since Jiang Chen had no such intentions. Although he was an open person, it was because he had suppressed himself for a long time. Even in just a month's worth of time, he became more mature.

He never planned on building a sex dungeon in the apocalypse. Even if he had the opportunity, he would not have the energy.

Compared to these things, more were awaiting him.

The mansion lacked a workforce in every aspect. The watchtower beside the wall required a person because he was unwilling to send Sun Jiao to guard the door every day. He also needed someone to fix the electronics and appliances in the mansion. With Sun Jiao's limited knowledge, she hemmed the solar power with pure luck. From electricians to construction workers, he needed a lot of people here.

He wouldn't risk allowing the survivors into the mansion. After wandering the wasteland for so many years, their morals were questionable. Instead, the slaves he purchased would be safer; nobody would risk their lives with the electronic bracelet on. That way, Jiang Chen wouldn't need to worry about them defying his command.

They would be more grateful for this opportunity because Jiang Chen had food. Even if he only fed them a bowl of congee every

day, it would be significantly better compared to their previous lives.

Jiang Chen considered himself a sympathetic person. He would never torture slaves, but it was rare for a master like this to exist in the apocalypse.

"Let me be clear first—this does not apply to Yao Yao. But don't ever think about taking off the electronic bracelets off the slaves." Sun Jiao also considered Yao Yao as part of the family, but she worried that Jiang Chen's "humanitarian considerations" would want to get rid of all the bracelets.

"Don't worry, I'm not that foolish yet," he said with a bitter smile. "I've matured. I do admit that I grew accustomed to using peaceful ways of thinking before, but I don't think that will happen again."

Sun Jiao nodded, pleased with the answer. Yao Yao, who was afraid to talk, also let out a sigh.

"In that case, I won't worry anymore. Is the family meeting over?" As she stretched, her breasts almost exploded out of her clothes.

When she heard the words "family meeting," Yao Yao uncontrollably blushed. Jiang Chen also burst out in laughter.

"Ahem, since it is a family meeting, then it's still not over." Jiang

Chen shook his head.

"Hmm? What else?" Sun Jiao leaned back against the chair.

He nodded with an earnest stare into her eyes. "It's about you. The things that you must do, can you tell me now?"

A hint of emotion flashed in her eyes. "You still remember."

"Of course, you are mine. I will never forget."

"I, I'm about to give up." Sun Jiao's gaze that was full of joy, sorrow, and confusion dodged his eyes.

"But I still remember, right? Why don't you tell me? It never hurts to try," Jiang Chen said sincerely.

She let out a long exhale and slowly opened her mouth.

"I managed to find the feeling of home here. I already feel incredibly lucky. The silly idea I have... since you already asked, I'll tell you."

She paused before she suddenly smiled.

"You know, Do you know? Tthis place is actually my home."

## Chapter 32: Sun Jiao's Past

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Sun Jiao's words surprised Jiang Chen and Yao Yao. Jiang Chen remembered she was born in survival base 071, so how was she connected to this mansion? When he heard Sun Jiao's explanation, however, he finally understood the connection as well as why she'd been starving in this mansion in the first place.

Sun Jiao's father owned this estate before the war, but due to the sudden eruption of the nuclear war, Sun Jiao's father became separated from his wife and son when they fled the city. Sun Jiao's father subsequently met Sun Jiao's mother in survival base 071 where they fell in love. With the blessings of the other survivors, they married and gave birth to Sun Jiao and another daughter, Sun Jiao's sister. Unfortunately, the joyful days were short-lived as the survival base was forced to open because of the depleted resources, drawing bandits that littered the wasteland into attacking the survival base. And so, Sun Jiao lost her family.

She was fortunate in that she managed to escape. She wandered the ruins, but instead of meeting mutants, zombies, or slave traders, she ran into a strange individual who didn't know her purpose.

Or perhaps it was better to say that she met her master.

In 2139, due to the enactment of the new strategic defense alliance, the Chinese People's Liberation Army, began to be referred to as PACA. A self-proclaimed PLA female soldier appeared and took care of Sun Jiao. She taught her the necessary skills to survive in the wasteland such as how to shoot a gun and

how to identify the good and bad. But sadly her master passed away in a conflict against an unknown group of militants, and that was how Sun Jiao started her lonely journey.

Sun Jiao wandered the wasteland trying to find her family, longing for the comfort of survival base 071. She knew that even if she managed to find them, life would not be the same again, but it served as her only motivation. She searched for their information around Dong Hai City until she confirmed from an old neighbor in Liu Ding Town that both of her parents passed away in that unfortunate incident but no information remained of her sister. The relentless Sun Jiao continued to explore the wasteland for any information, even coming across her father's home from before the war...

It was precisely this mansion, but because she ran out of nutrient supplies here, she starved until falling unconscious.

Then by coincidence, she met Jiang Chen here.

"Mhmm, I understand. I'll keep an eye out for you. If we can find your sister, you'll be very happy right?" Jiang Chen said with a smile after listening to her narration.

"Jiang Chen." Her eyes became moist. If not for Yao Yao's presence, she would've pushed him to the ground and expressed the loving emotion filling her heart.

Ahem. Although inappropriate, Sun Jiao didn't know other ways to express her love.

"What about Yao Yao? Can I help you with anything? Since we are a family now, don't hide anything and tell me, okay?" Jiang Chen rubbed Yao Yao's head.

Yao Yao shook his head and gently covered Jiang Chen's hand with both of her hands. "I'm already so lucky. My only family is brother Jiang Chen and sister Sun Jiao."

Her smile was joyful, but it made Jiang Chen slightly teary.

Yao Yao made lunch. This gentle girl took the effort to practice cooking, touching Jiang Chen even more.

This was the first time he ate a meal made by a girl.

He was so touched that he almost began to cry. [Ahem, that was an exaggeration.]

Yao Yao looked at the way Jiang Chen devoured the lunch, and a joyous smile appeared on her face. As for Sun Jiao, she always ate food as if there was no tomorrow. It would be odd if she acted any differently.

After lunch, the three of them cleaned up. Sun Jiao organized the supplies within the living room, and Jiang Chen followed Yao Yao to her room as he had other matters.

"Yao Yao, have you finished preparing for the vault door?"

"Psh!" Yao Yao burst laughing. "Big brother doesn't know yet, but Sun Jiao already emptied the bank vault for you. Haha, she probably forgot to tell you because she was too surprised. She's hoping to be praised."

Jiang Chen paused momentarily as a genuine delight flashed across his face.

"Haha, sister Sun Jiao is not you. She is probably not interested in my recognition." Because of how cute Yao Yao looked, Jiang Chen uncontrollably rubbed her hair.

Like a squirrel, Yao Yao closed her eyes to enjoy the moment. Then as if she suddenly remembered something, she blinked her sweet eyes at Jiang Chen. "No! Sister Sun Jiao want to receive praise from big brother like Yao Yao!"

She thoughtfully nodded her head, sure that her analysis was accurate.

Surprised by her words, Jiang Chen laughed.

"Mhmm, you're right."

[I have to express my gratitude to this girl. Although most of the time she is very naughty, at times she can be surprisingly considerate.]

He put aside the conversation about gold and inquired about mobile game development.

"Mobile game? The game you play on your cell phone? Are these things popular in big brother's world?" she asked without completely understanding him. It puzzled Jiang Chen because she spent the first twelve years of her life before the war. Were there no electronic games at that time? That was impossible!

Jiang Chen voiced his thoughts, but the answer he received made him quite conflicted.

"Mhmm. That's what you mean. I think I know what you're referring to, but the popular games before the war were all played within the gaming chamber."

"Gaming chamber?"

"Yes! The mainstream games were based on design engines within the virtual reality system. Lying down in the gaming chamber helped in relaxing the body, so some people even chose to spend their sleeping time in games. A lot of portable devices that connected directly to the neural network also achieved similar functions. No one installed extra games within the mobile devices."

It was not because there were no more games. With the advancement of technology, the gaming format evolved over time. Just like how the DS faded through the passage of history and PSP-related game devices were no longer able to capture the market



under the fierce competition of smartphones.

[What should I do?] Jiang Chen had a stern face and fell into deep thought.

[Abandon mobile games? But for a company just in the initial growth phase, a jump into virtual reality would be too forced. Aren't there any other options?]

"Can you show me that phone you're talking about, big brother?" Yao Yao asked in a quiet voice.

"Ah, of course, here you go." Jiang Chen immediately took out his Samsung phone and gave it to Yao Yao. "Feel free to play with it."

Yao Yao didn't hesitate, and she immediately started dissecting the phone on her workbench.

"Woo... Why is the CPU performance so low? Only a couple gigabytes of RAM?" Yao Yao examined the phone and mumbled words that made Jiang Chen quite embarrassed.

It didn't take long before Yao Yao finally understood this "antique."

"What do you think?" Jiang Chen rushed to ask as Yao Yao took off her protective glasses.

"Hmm, it doesn't look too complicated. If we use D++ to program it, we should be able to compress everything into this tiny space." She touched her tiny chin with a focused expression. "Ah, although mobile games are programs, you also have to consider art, music, and experience, but I don't have any experience."

Jiang Chen thought for a minute and realized the problem as well. Not all programming majors became game developers like Sid Meier. The key to games was the experience gained. Even if Yao Yao could compress an enormous amount of content using a more advanced language to reduce the requirement for hardware systems, the fundamental issue was still whether it was fun to play.

Suddenly, Yao Yao slapped her head as if she just remembered something.

"Oh! Let me take care of this. I promise that I'll give you what you want within five days."

"So quickly?!" Jiang Chen was stunned. His original plan was for Yao Yao to finish within two months.

"Hehe." Yao Yao felt a little shy as she rubbed her nose. "It would be difficult to program from scratch, but I just remembered there's a library nearby. Sister Sun Jiao brought these back for me from there. There must be some historical codes from the database in the library that will include the games big brother wants. As long as sister Sun Jiao makes another trip to the library and copies all the files related to games between 2100 and 2200, I only need to fix the code a little to make it work."

.....

Jiang Chen left the room, gently closing the door.

[Why is my heart beating so fast? Am I a monster after all?] Jiang Chen murmured in his heart as he walked toward Sun Jiao.

He spotted Sun Jiao at the underground storage counting the supplies. The cans and preserved crackers were neatly separated beside the wall. Rice was organized within polyethylene plastic containers which were common in the wasteland after the military previously parachuted tightly sealed rescue supplies.

The underground storage felt cold. The original owner, Sun Jiao's father, previously stored wine in here but after it was discovered by other survivors, there were no traces of wine.

The current quantity of supplies made it was necessary to scavenge some fridges from the residences nearby.

After some repairs, they would be usable. It just meant that the solar power had to be upgraded at the same time. The current electricity was just enough to sustain the power usage in the mansion, but with a few more fridges, it would be nearly impossible to meet the demand.

## Chapter 33: Back to Sixth Street

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The energetic Jiang Chen and the flushed Sun Jiao left the basement together.

Jiang Chen's cocky look made the embarrassed Sun Jiao pinch his waist, but she lost her balance and almost fell.

"Be careful, don't hurt yourself." Jiang Chen immediately caught her as if nothing happened. Then as he pretended to blame Sun Jiao, he slapped her on the butt.

Sun Jiao gritted her teeth as she looked at Jiang Chen's smirk, her embarrassed look made Jiang Chen feel extremely satisfied.

"You bastard..." The usually angry Sun Jiao only managed to come up with a weak comeback. Despite her flustered appearance, the tenderness in her eyes couldn't be hidden.

This small detail didn't escape the "experienced" Jiang Chen.

He kissed Sun Jiao on the lips and escaped with a grin on his face before Sun Jiao realized what happened. He didn't want to let Sun Jiao to get back at him.

[This guy...]

Sun Jiao stared at the direction in which Jiang Chen left and

angrily stomped her feet. She wanted to chase after and pinch him, but her body felt listless.

[He seems to have gotten better...]

Sun Jiao blushed red as her legs almost gave out on her. She desperately tried to find her balance against the wall.

She gave his distant figure an angry stare and swore she'd get her revenge.

[F\*ck! Just wait until tonight!]

When he arrived at the poolside, he sucked in a deep breath of cold air.

There were at least ten tons of gold in the pool. A ton of gold had a volume of 0.051 cubic meters, but the gold bars at the corner of the pool were at least half a cubic meter. Jiang Chen used an electronic balance and roughly measured the weight of the gold.

It came out to be a total of 12.2 tons of gold which would rake in roughly 500 million dollars.

Jiang Chen was ecstatic. Although he mentally prepared himself, it was impossible to not be surprised with such a giant pile of gold in front of him.

He took another deep breath. Jiang Chen didn't immediately move the gold into the storage dimension. There was no rush since he needed to make a trip to Sixth Street tomorrow, and he needed the storage dimension for exchanged goods. The gold wouldn't go anywhere.

If he left now, it would be nightfall by the time he arrives at the Sixth Street, so he decided to depart tomorrow morning and use the remaining time to prepare.

He went back to his room and grabbed the PK200 assault rifle that he hadn't used in a while before stepping out onto the wooden watchtower beside the wall.

The dynamic gun's presence made him feel safe with its surreal sci-fi design.

He clicked the safety and pulled the bolt.

After concentrating, he raised the gun and locked the scope onto a frightening face wondering around and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

A breath of fire erupted from the gun barrel amidst the billowing smoke.

The bullet hit the zombie in the chest, failing to kill it immediately. As if suddenly awakened, the wounded zombie began

to frantically wave his limbs but was unable to get up.

[I aimed for the head but hit the chest...]

Jiang Chen shook his head and aimed with the scope again.

The noise of the struggling zombie attracted the attention of the other slow-moving zombies, but they failed to find the source of attack without the smell of a survivor and continued to wander aimlessly.

He aimed through the crosshair again.

Bang!

A breath of flame discharged from the barrel once more. This time Jiang Chen didn't miss, the zombie's head exploding into pieces and leaving a sludge of black blood.

"Four times scope is ideal for mid-distance range battle. If you insist on using it at this distance, I suggest you change the zoom to 100 meters." He heard Sun Jiao's ridicule at his back.

"Uhm, where is it? " Jiang Chen remembered a game he played before where he could adjust the gun's magnification before shooting.

The only problem was that there was no page-up key in real life.

"It's here." Sun Jiao pointed out the button beside the scope.

So that was the problem. After Jiang Chen changed the zoom from zero to one hundred, he attempted the same shot again—the accuracy was much higher.

"Mechanical sight would be enough at this distance." Sun Jiao reached out and turned the PK200's scope to the side, exposing the mechanical aim. "Try this."

"Oh, so this is how you use it." Jiang Chen was able to quickly acclimate himself to the gun, but because his targets were zombies, he wasn't certain how accurate he was.

Sun Jiao stood silently beside Jiang Chen and spoke up to fix his mistakes with tips on how to shoot and utilize cover. Time flew by before it was already time for dinner.

"I think that's enough for today. Zombies are dangerous at night so it's better not to anger them." Sun Jiao glanced at the crowd of zombies below them. Their endless numbers made it impossible to eliminate them. Despite being killed by mutants and humans both, there were constantly more being born in the downtown area, spreading nonstop.

His record was satisfactory as he managed to kill 97 zombies with 120 bullets. Sun Jiao nodded in discreet. Although it was nothing impressive, for a beginner it was a good record. She was less nervous about his ability to survive. After all, even if he couldn't



win a fight, he had the ability to run away.

"Hehe, are you feeling better?" Jiang Chen closed the safety and after slinging the gun over his back, asked Sun Jiao a daring question with a grin on his face.

She hesitated for a moment before her face suddenly turned to a burning shade of red.

"Oww!" Jiang Chen painfully rubbed the leg kicked by Sun Jiao, "I'm just worried about you."

"Wait for me tonight!" Sun Jiao grabbed him by his collar and said in a vicious tone. She let go of him and jumped off the wooden watch tower in a huff.

Jiang Chen quivered. [She wouldn't tie me up again, would she?]

His face turned bitter as he thought about the chances.

[What if I hide in Yao Yao's room tonight?]

Jiang Chen ultimately decided to face reality.

He obediently received his punishment from Sun Jiao that night. The next morning, he dragged his weary body back into his room.

[F\*ck, why can't I control my own feet?]

He wanted to slap himself for provoking her last night.

He packed his equipment and put away the canned food and compressed crackers into the storage dimension before heading towards the door.

"Brother, are you leaving now?" With her eyes still half-closed, she asked dazedly from the top of the stairs.

"Mhmm, I'm going to the Sixth Street. I'll be back in a few days." Jiang Chen smiled at her as he checked his equipment one last time.

"Umm, bring this with you." Yao Yao held the handrail and slowly walked down the stairs. She gave Jiang Chen a small bag.

"What's this?" He looked at the bag, puzzled..

"Some small equipment that I designed. There's a drone that can connect to the EP and scan the terrain within a one thousand meter radius. Hehe, as long as I can help big brother out." Finished speaking, she rubbed her sleepy eyes and walked towards the sofa, curling up and falling asleep again.

"This little girl, is she not afraid of getting cold?" Jiang Chen shook his head with a smile. He wrapped the bag around his waist and walked towards the sofa.

His hands passed under Yao Yao's knees and shoulder as he lifted her.

[Light, and also soft with the fragrance of a natural milky smell.]

He brought her back to her bedroom before he left the mansion.

Only blood remained from the zombies Jiang Chen shot yesterday. During the night, the active zombies ate the motionless bodies to acquire proteins. With enough, they would slowly evolve like the Roshan they encountered at the Sixth Street last time. It was apparently common to see these evolved zombies in the downtown area, so most survival camps were built in rural areas.

He opened the manhole and directed his flashlight inside. After confirming that it was safe, he jumped down without hesitation.

It was quite scary to walk down here alone, but since the biggest threat was eliminated and it wasn't his first time traversing the tunnels, Jiang Chen acted courageously. Slowly, he progressed towards Sixth Street with his assault rifle in hand.

When he passed by the cannibal tribe's location again, an uncontrollable expression of disgust flashed across his face. Thankfully, the cave was cleansed by fire, and no traces remained.

It was important to do so because the smell of dead bodies attracted mutated rats. If there were only one or two of them, he'd

be okay, but if he encountered a group of them...

Nevertheless, it was safe along the way, but he did feel bored at times.

Reaching his destination, Jiang Chen pushed open the manhole, feeling the first ray of sunshine in five hours.

He took a deep breath of fresh air. He marked a safe symbol on the full-sensory computer pen before he put it away again.

The sewer system was a relatively fast way to move between places in the wasteland, but the complex tunnels made it extremely dangerous as well. It was impossible to tell what was hidden in the shadows, whether it was a nest of Death Claws or a cave of cannibals.

Jiang Chen tried to take the route he had used last time, and whenever he reached unexplored areas, he tensed up at full alert.

Leaving the sewer, Jiang Chen cautiously pulled up his gun. He didn't know if the Hui Zhong Mercenaries were still looking for him. He would only be safe from them after entering the door.

He made a beeline towards the Sixth Street.

The procedure was no different from last time.

Soldiers in black combat suits approached Jiang Chen and signaled for him to display his identification on his EP. After confirming that he had no criminal records, they immediately allowed him to pass.

It was the same desolate ghetto from last time with the weary refugees. Jiang Chen didn't buy labor right away since he now knew the rules of slave trading—all the people sold were either criminals or individuals who lost ability to work.

Jiang Chen didn't want either type. Instead, he was looking for harmless individuals with a clean record and in large numbers as well. Therefore, he had to acquire them through other means.

Jiang Chen didn't choose to go to the market this time. He first rented a storage near the industrial area and left all the canned food and compressed crackers there. After, he directly entered the inner circle examination station.

Since it was a bulk quantity trade, it was necessary to find someone who could afford it. Other than the workforce, Jiang Chen also intended to purchase something that was not normally sold on the market.

# Chapter 34: The Inner Circle

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"Please display your ID, sir" It was the same routine check.

Below the towering concrete wall was a reinforced metal gate. The inner circle was substantially more reinforced than the outer zone. Jiang Chen was fortunate enough to witness the greatness of the city from within.

After he had paid a crystal for his trouble, he left all his weapons in the storage by the gate. The guard at the examination station allowed him to pass.

In front of the gate was a spider tank with a triangular shaped cannon. The limbs of the vehicle attached to tracks cast a fictional vibe. The occasional patrol team passed by was also equipped with the most advanced work of the century; black carbon nano armor suits and fluid looking rifles. Sun Jiao mentioned that the inner circle's soldiers were the Sixth Street core power. Most were private soldiers who belonged to the rulers of the Sixth Street "Group of Ten Council." Despite their advanced equipment, the soldiers that were a part of the outer circle were part of the Sixth Street's public assets. Hence the nature between the two was entirely different.

The shocked Jiang Chen considered acquiring some of their equipment as he approached his destination.

Along the way, Jiang Chen also saw some pedestrians. Only a unique group of people lived in the inner circle of the Sixth Street;

those included specialized technologists, wealthy mercenary leaders, and investors who purchased assets within the area. It was known as the land of the wealthy.

It is also worth mentioning that the mercenaries stationed in the Sixth Street acted differently compared to the wandering half-mercenary half-bandits on the wasteland. The majority of them defended the Sixth Street along with the soldiers in exchange for commissions. They would also occasionally be sent to complete missions outside, or protect trade routes. The mercenaries registered at the Sixth Street were trustworthy as they all paid a fee as a guarantee for their services. When they no longer acted in the intention for their employer, not only does the guarantor inside the inner circle receive imprisonment, the Sixth Street would send out military power to eliminate the rebellious forces.

[Heaven Island Hotel, your comfortable home.]

Jiang Chen walked into a hotel that resembled a pre-war luxurious mansion. Since he was there for business, he must also show the correct gestures. Jiang Chen paid for a five-day stay without a blink of an eye. The total bill came out to be 50 crystals. The hotel owner immediately demonstrated the attitude similar to worshipping God as he respectfully escorted him to his room. Only the wealthy and the influential could afford a hotel like this; the hotel owner would do anything to please them.

The high price of the hotel meant that people rarely stayed there.

Only renowned merchants or millionaires from other survivor camps, or even from outside of Wanghai city would stay there.

According to Sun Jiao, anyone who lived here would attract the attention of the public.

Jiang Chen wanted that attention. How would he do business without it?

He was not afraid of the troubles that would ensue. The neutrality of the Sixth Street continued for more than ten years. Their development was not the product of short-sighted growth strategies.

Just this point alone was worth the recognition of the Sixth Street's policy. Ten capitalists formed the "Group of Ten Council" who implemented the freedom of trade policy within the walls. The balance of power allowed the strict enforcement of the policy to be enacted. No one wanted to be the first to break the rule of the game. It would not be okay to kill your business partner and ruin the deal for your neighbor.

However, privacy was less of an issue. As to what Jiang Chen expected, the moment he stepped into the room, the hotel manager reported this wealthy customer to his boss.

<Picture:

Identification: Fish Bone Food Corporation Representative, Jiang Chen

Time of Stay: July 9th to 14th.>



Jiang Chen's information was presented in front of someone.

"Fish Bone Food Corporation? Jiang Chen? Very compelling." A middle-aged man with a bowl cut leaned against the office chair. Under his thick eyebrows was a pair of hawk-sharp eyes.

"Do you want to get in contact with him, boss?" The assistant in uniform pushed up her glasses. As Zhao Chenwu's assistant, she was not only critical to his work, she also acted as his bodyguard and occasionally helped to alleviate his needs at times of desire.

Zhao Chenwu, Group of Ten Council Member. He controlled 13% of the military strength within the inner circle. He was the owner of two firearm factories, one pharmaceutical company, along with an array of fixed assets in the inner circle. He was also known as the president of the Sixth Street's renowned Zhao Corporation.

"There is no rush, let's look at the situation more closely." A grin appeared on Zhao Chenwu's face. He was uncertain about the intention of this young man.

Food Corporation? Where can you even find a piece of arable land on the wasteland? Even if it were through soilless culture, the vegetable produced would be in odd shapes due to the radiation, and it could even be poisonous. The soil culture also existed at the Sixth Street, but most of the produce were not edible. The taste of the remainder produce was not fresh either. With exaggeration, if you planted a watermelon, it could grow into a bean for you.

There was no doubt that the technology existed outside of Wang Hai where it was possible to grow to produce on the wasteland. The rarity along with the high cost resulted in the limitedness of the technology. Could it be a simulated ecosystem? He also heard about the technology before. Although the advancement of technology was far superior before the war, everyone's current focus on innovation was extremely skewed.

As the controlling shareholder of the Heaven Island hotel, he encountered many representatives at the Sixth Street before. It was his first time hearing about the existence of a food corporation.

There was never a shortage of mutant beef. Just ordinary people couldn't afford it.

Zhao Chenwu shook his head and placed this report away. He looked at the clock and felt a sense of hunger. He asked his assistant, "Is lunch ready?"

"Yes, my boss. Do I need to confirm that today's lunch is curry chicken?" The assistant said in a professional tone.

After she had received Zhao Chenwu's acknowledgment, she left the room. She then came back momentarily with a plate of steamy curry chicken.

The unique aroma of curry chicken made Zhao Chenwu's saliva form at a rapid rate. Without any consideration for his composure, he devoured the meal. The assistant also swallowed as she saw how

much her boss was enjoying the meal. She knew better that there was none for her.

The total cost of the curry chicken was 20 crystals, which was equivalent to two night of stay at the hotel.

The price was not even the problem; it was the fact that you couldn't buy it with money.

The outer circle's exchange office purchased 20 cans weeks ago. They sold each can with a price of 60 crystals to the influential individuals in the inner circle. Zhao Chenwu used his position as the Group of Ten Council member to get his hands on one of them. The good thing was that the office didn't auction the canned food or the price would be significantly higher.

He divided this one can into three separate servings to enjoy.

Zhao Chenwu investigated the whereabouts of the person who sold the cans. He heard that as soon as they left the gate, the Hui Zhong mercenaries went after them. No one knew if they were still dead or alive. When Zhao Chenwu heard this information, he was so angry that he almost broke the table and cursed the generations of Hui Zhong Mercenaries. He almost sent out his private forces to teach those fools a lesson. However, he resisted the temptation due to his position of power as the mercenaries didn't break any rules within the Sixth Street. If he did anything, he would have broken the rule of the game.

The last piece of the precious curry chicken went into his

stomach as he savored the taste. He shook head as he threw the fantasy about curry chicken into the back of his mind. Although he was curious about the taste of sauteed beef his friend Sir Ding bought, he must have finished already as well.

He had a business to run after all. The food was only a small part of his life. He took over a stack of documents and began reading the operation status of his company.

At the same time, he glanced at the information relating to the hotel guest; he felt a sudden familiarity with the name.

[Hmm, why is the name Jiang Chen so familiar? Where did I see it before?]

If Jiang Chen knew that the canned food he sold to the exchange office was split into three servings by the big bosses within the inner circle, he would be hysterical.

Right now, Jiang Chen was pleasantly enjoying his stay.

He was the only one in the entire mansion. Despite the suppressed feeling cast by the radiation cloud and ray of mutated sunshine, which made it difficult for him to enjoy the holiday, he was quite satisfied by the facilities within the mansion.

Such as the relaxation chamber. When Jiang Chen lied inside, it felt as if his entire body was covered in jelly.

The view was not as beautiful as the Sheraton in Sanya, but the technology sure made up for it. [Why do we need nature when we have technology.]

Jiang Chen who stepped out of the relaxation chamber felt every pore on his body was exfoliated. The cleanliness was substantially higher compared to taking a shower. It even removed dust at the micro level.

[Should I bring one back?] Jiang Chen touched his chin as he thought about this question. He absolutely loved this.

He casually grabbed a bathrobe to cover himself and ran to other amenities to enjoy them.

The ping pong robot was designed for wealthy people who had no opportunity to exercise. He abandoned his racquet the second he realized he couldn't beat the robot.

He was interested in the full-sensory movie theater.

The 7 Dimensional movie, that theaters praised in the modern world, was nothing compared to this.

He put on the helmet and strapped himself into the soft chair. The surreal feeling made it feel as if it was the reality. He was shocked to find out that he was standing in the middle of New York. Jiang Chen felt the breeze lightly caress across his face as he watched a battle between cops and thugs. He could even

experience everything through the protagonist's view. It was as if he was fighting himself. He could feel the screeching bullet and experience the pain himself. He just couldn't control the protagonist's movement.

The thrilled Jiang Chen left the theater and returned to his room.

# Chapter 35: Fishbone Food Corporation

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Jiang Chen's mood was hardly pleasant. It was because he had just f\*cked a sex doll.

He was curious as to why the feeling was off. It was the silicone after all that made Jiang Chen conflicted about the idea. He initially thought the number 410 was just a setting and the private service was due to the hotel's high-quality maids. However, he soon realized that the girl was a robot!

He came to that conclusion after using all of his techniques, and the “girl” still did not show any signs of pleasure.

That would be a short but funny story from the trip. Jiang Chen didn't think too about the sex toy because he didn't have the same urges as before. In his view, some of the intimacy is more joyful when there are two people.

God knows what the Heaven Island Hotel's manager would think after he learned Jiang Chen's thought process. This robot was the result of centuries of innovation. Perfectly designed ergonomic with every detail to match. No human would look that flawless. Pregnancy or STD would not be a concern at all as a rinse of the internal parts would allow for repeated usage. If the manager knew his peculiar thought process, he would have just gone to the ghetto and found him a prostitute there.

The culture divide meant that they wouldn't understand each other. Jiang Chen preferred the realistic emotions carried by an

actual person. He left the robot to the side. The occasional shoulder rub was quite relaxing.

He gratefully rejected the meal service offered by the hotel as he cheerfully lied on the magnetically levitating chair. He ordered the mechanical beauty to pick up a fruit slice from the can and feed it to him.

[What a lavish life!]

An entire day passed, still, no one visited him. This made Jiang Chen uncertain about his plans.

[This is odd, do I need to be more proactive?] He raised his eyebrows as questions floated through his mind. He was not familiar with the place so he had no clue who the point of contact would be. Since the hotel registered him as a food corporation representative, in theory, anyone interested would contact him. Jiang Chen didn't believe the hotel manager would keep this a secret, and he was uncertain how many people would have access to the information.

Jiang Chen over dramatized the severity of the situation because a merchant who smelt the opportunity for crystals was rushing there.

It was the merchant that had to divide the can into three servings – Zhao Chenwu.



“Please come in.” When he heard the doorbell, he answered the door as the voice activated system automatically unlocked the door.

When he saw the visitor, he didn’t act surprised. He slowly and respectably stood up and asked the visitor to sit.

Zhao Chenwu spotted the fruit can on the table and swallowed his saliva, but his facial expression remained calm. Although he had a passion for food, he was a man of influence, so he kept his composure. At this position of power, it was easy to disguise his desire.

The assistant behind him only glanced at the can on the table once, and her expression also remained the same.

Jiang Chen who was observing the situation became ecstatic.

Disguise would mean that there was a problem. The more you pretend you don’t care, the more you demonstrate your interest.

The value of food was without a doubt extremely high. A careless expression would only suggest the disguise behind the intention. If Zhao Chenwu were pretending, that would mean that he was here to negotiate. Jiang Chen’s plan was to find a business partner. It would be up to this negotiation to see if there would be a deal.

“Hello, Mr. Jiang. My name is Zhao Chenwu; this is my assistant Su Lei.” Zhao Chenwu cut straight to the point and introduced

himself. When she heard the boss introduce her, she respectably acknowledged.

“Hmm? You guys clearly have done your homework.” Jiang Chen gave Zhao Chenwu a thought-provoking look. The middle-aged man didn’t display any awkward emotion as if the provoking action didn’t bother him at all.

“Mr. Jiang’s detailed information means that you also want people to find you.” A smile suddenly appeared on Zhao Chenwu’s face.

Indeed, it was not required to input the customer’s information at the time of check in. A name and genetic ID would be enough. But Jiang Chen forcefully added the “Fish Bone Food Corporation Representative” along with his name. His intention was quite clear.

“Haha, let’s not talk about this anymore. Since we have an important visitor here, I can’t be too cheap as the host.” Jiang Chen gave the mechanical beauty some orders as the robot directly entered the room.

Zhao Chenwu puzzled examined Jiang Chen and his intention. Jiang Chen was doing the same thing.

Momentarily, the mechanical beauty walked in with two pieces of fresh, watery orange slices. She directly placed the plate in front of the confused Zhao Chenwu.

“Fruit can, a specialty of our company. I already opened the one on the counter so it would be rude of me to serve you guys with it. I just asked my temporary maid to open two more cans. My passion for oranges meant that I only brought oranges with me on this trip. I hope the two of you will not be offended.” With a grin on his face, Jiang Chen gestured Zhao Chenwu to try.

[Why would I be offended? This is just showing off.] Zhao Chenwu cursed in his mind.

The fresh-looking orange slices were only available a few years after the war. The supermarket had some yet to be raided, but the supplies were all gone within two years.

It has been ten years since he had an orange this delicious. He chewed on the soft orange as his edged and rough face showed a sign of excitement. However, he immediately turned into his usual collected expression when he met Jiang Chen’s smile.

To greet the guest with luxury like this, especially including the assistant as well, demonstrated not only his good faith but also the amount of wealth he had.

Zhao Chenwu thoughtfully looked at Su Lei who still acted calm, but her mouth was chewing non-stop. He pushed the toothpick inside a slice of orange and didn’t continue to eat.

There would be plenty of time to taste the delicacy after the business was done.

“Does it taste good?” Jiang Chen asked with a smile. He also picked up a slice of orange and put in his mouth.

“It’s delicious. To be honest, even though the Sixth Street can produce some fruits, the production is limited. Due to the radiation, it is difficult to maintain the quality of the fruit, which means only some are edible. The rest could only be extracted for nutrient purposes.” These were not secrets at all as anyone on the street would know. Zhao Chenwu did not hide any information. Instead, he was straight forward and acted as honestly as possible.

“I have heard about this before. Therefore I see opportunities.” Jiang Chen nodded.

“The canned food at the exchange office must be Mr. Jiang's move.” Zhao Chenwu said without any fluctuation in his emotion.

“You are correct. I sold it at a price of 50 crystals per can. I heard that the price was raised to 60?”

“In that case, since Mr. Jiang showed up in the inner circle and not the exchange office, you must be preparing for a big deal.” Zhao Chenwu’s face displayed a burning passion.

“Indeed, I believe my products would sell very well in the Sixth Street.” The opportunity finally came. A glimpse of confidence flashed across Jiang Chen’s face, as the person who brought up the question was important in any negotiation, for the one that took the initiative would not be at an advantage.

Zhao Chenwu couldn't contain his excitement that he was no longer calm..

The canned food would sell out the moment it enters the market. As a capitalist himself, Zhao Chenwu would not let the profit in front of him escape.

“Do I have the pleasure of becoming your business partner?” A thought provoking smile appeared on Zhao Chenwu's face.

“Of course, if Mr. Zhao has enough influence,” Jiang Chen responded with a vague answer.

“It looks like Mr. Jiang didn't investigate about me.” Zhao Chenwu smiled.

“Any individual or force can become our business partner granted they meet all the requirements. Investigating every individual within the inner circle would be inefficient. I know that as long as I show up here, people with business insight into business will find me. It is only a matter of time,” Jiang Chen shook his head and said calmly.

However, Zhao Chenwu recognized the other relevant information within Jiang Chen's words.

“Are you talking about the trade? Wait, you can provide stable supply?” Zhao Chenwu pressed his hands against the table and stood up immediately. He stared at Jiang Chen with disbelief.

[It would be impossible in Wanghai. It must be an organization outside of Wanghai. Simulated ecosystem facility? Regardless of what it is, I must make the deal.]

“Mr. Zhao, you are acting overzealously,” Although he was ecstatic in his mind, he remained collected and said it without any emotion.

“I apologize for my manner. Allow me to introduce myself again.” Zhao Chenwu realized his actions were overeager. He fixed up his clothes and extended his right hand. “Member of the Group of Ten Council, president of the Zhao Corporation, Zhao Chenwu. On behalf of the Zhao Corporation, I extend my warm welcome to your company’s presence regarding potential deals at the Sixth Street.”

[Oh my, part of the Group of Ten Council!]

Jiang Chen hid his surprise. These are the conglomerate that controlled all the capital within the neutral Sixth Street. Since they are part of the forces in the Sixth Street, safety would not be a concern either. The absolute neutrality is a law that was strictly enforced for more than 20 years.

He stood up and shook Zhao Chenwu’s hand to express his gratitude.

“I’m Jiang Chen. A representative who is responsible for the negotiation of the deal. On behalf of the Fishbone Food

Corporation, I express my gratitude to the Zhao Corporation at the Sixth Street. Let's put the gestures aside and talk about the details of the business."

"Haha, Mr. Jiang is a straightforward person. This was what I expected." Joyous by the suggestion, Zhao Chenwu happily accepted.

He originally thought Jiang Chen was a flipper merchant, common to the wasteland, with some unique products. Even if he brought him considerable profit in one trade, it would not be long term as flipper merchants wandered across the wasteland without a home.

However, Jiang Chen's proposition was a long-term trade agreement which offered a significantly different meaning.

A stable trade route, with an external survivor camp with the product being luxury canned food, Zhao Chenwu was thankful that he took the initiative first. If he let this money printing machine escape from in front of him, he would be the laughing stock of the entire inner circle merchants.

# Chapter 36: Trade Route

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It is extremely challenging to conduct trade on the wasteland.

The endless amount of bandits along with the unsuspecting mutants made the establishment of a proper trade route between survivor camps almost impossible. Only camps in close proximities could establish stable trade routes.

Some famous trade routes include the one established between Liuding and the Beer Can Company. Both parties even sent out some of its forces to create supplying stations along the way to reinforce firepower. These supplying stations would often assign a strike force to provide protection to the merchants along the trade route.

The development of these trade routes are the symptoms of the difference between production capability and technology level among survival camps.

The tale that Liuding Town is a aircraft carrier is something unheard of. The aircraft carrier was previously known as Bohai which broke down in the harbor after the nuclear explosion. Due to various reasons, it was abandoned after the war and was only utilized by the survivors after the apocalypse. They modified the carrier with "illegal" upgrades which made the vessel not even close to resembling a ship. It would be more fitting to call it a platform. The absolute safety of the ship allowed it to become the haven primarily for the entertainment industry and secondarily for the high-tech industry.



Don't be mistaken. The Beer Bottle Company also did not produce beer bottles, it is a survival base focused on heavy industrial production.

The base is located at the Wanghai City's rural port near the heavy industrial park. Not only is this place capable of producing the missiles used in the electromagnetic cannon onboard, but it also has the capacity to manufacture high-tech guided missiles. The capacity is however limited, with most of the raw materials collected from waste.

Of course, all this information is outside of the context.

"To open the new market at Wanghai City, I plan to establish a supply station here. In fact, I am planning this already. We are currently extremely lacking in the force and equipment necessary. The corporate headquarter provided me with the order to gather all help onsite. We are going to invest all first-year profit into the construction of the supply station. Population, equipment, firearms are three points we need to discuss. Also another point, I don't want criminals without a guarantee in their personality.

["Supply station?" Why don't you establish it in the Sixth Street? We can provide the best security for your business.] Zhao Chenwu slightly raised his eyebrows as he asked the question in his mind.

"Despite the Sixth Street's respectable reputation in Wanghai city, in our perspective, you are still unknown and unfamiliar. This is the strategy established by the corporation. I can only follow within the boundaries set." Jiang Chen continued to make up an elaborate story as he directed everything to the nonexistent

company outside of Wanghai City.

Regardless, the explanation was convenient and convincing at the same time.

Zhao Chenwu thought momentarily before he opened his mouth.

“The workforce is not a problem. In general, the labor force in the ghetto remains excessive even to this day. Although on paper it is prohibited to sell non-criminals...” a mischievous smile flashed across Zhao Chenwu’s face, “...if there are not a lot of people, I can create some accidents and make them part of the tradeable population.”

Rules are set by people. Therefore there are always ways to exploit within the rules as long it is within reason.

Jiang Chen nodded.

“Not a lot, I think 30 should suffice.”

30 people compared with a population over ten thousand is like a drop of water in the vast ocean. No one would use 30 people as an excuse to attack him, Zhao Chenwu immediately agreed to the proposition.

“As to the necessary equipment. I included everything on this list.” Jiang Chen smiled as he took out an electronic card and gently put it on the table.

These graphene produced cards could store up to 12 gigabytes of full-sensory information. It could be charged directly under the sun which made it incredibly easy to use. The Sixth Street market sold it for a low price.

Zhao Chenwu accepted the card. He didn't seem bothered as he clicked the start button on the left side. A list appeared in front of his eyes.

"Anti-corrosive Concrete Mixer, Nanotube Generator, Graphene Cutting Bed. These should be okay. There are some stored within the Sixth Street storage. I'll just use Zhao Corporation's name to purchase it. However, the Firearm Production Line and the Nanochip Production Bed." A puzzled look appeared on Zhao Chenwu's face. "These type of goods are difficult to obtain. Firearm-related production is strictly prohibited to be sold at any survival base. The Nanochip Production Bed is not only massive and difficult to transport, even if you purchased it, without some technical background, nothing would be manufactured from the machine."

Zhao Chenwu didn't lie. The Nanochip has a comprehensive application, especially in the production of full-sensory equipment which will be critical to entering the full-sensory computer market. However, to produce the Nanochip, a series of accompanying production lines were necessary. The nano-sized silicon board must be cut by a high precision machine.

Jiang Chen touched his chin as he thought for a moment.

[It looks like there's no need to rush, it is probably better to do it one step at a time.]

Jiang Chen who made up his mind didn't insist on pursuing his conditions.

"It is fine to exclude the Firearm Production Line and the Nanochip Production Bed. Though, due to the need for security at the supply station, I don't know if Mr. Zhao is interested in the firearm business."

There was no way he was not interested. Zhao Chenwu promised that he could find any Sixth Street approved equipment for Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen expressed his gratitude.

Since both parties managed to come to an agreement in the trade, they entered the discussion phase in regards to the details of the deal.

After a careful deliberation, the details of the agreement were finalized. The female assistant named Su Lei professionally produced the electronic agreement and handed Jiang Chen and her boss a copy each. After Jiang Chen had examined the items were consistent in the deliberation, he pressed his thumb onto the contract. Zhao Chenwu was confident in his assistant's ability as he only scanned the document for a few seconds before stamping it with his fingerprint.

When two genetic ID appeared on the electronic contract, it symbolled the enactment of the contract. It was rather symbolic because business ethics were not enforced within the apocalypse. The key to honoring the agreement was profit for both parties.

The fruit cans were priced at 30 crystals, the meats varied between 10-20 crystals based on its composition, and the crackers sold at 1 crystal per piece. The price of the goods was not higher only because Jiang Chen was planning to sell in bulk quantities. An item was valued in proportion to its rarity. When Jiang Chen sold the 20 cans, the high price of 50 crystals was well justified. However, since a stable trade agreement was signed, there would be a continuous supply of the canned food. Hence, such high price would not be seen anymore.

The price was certainly not cheap, the hefty price tag was still five times the cost of mutant beef. He would also have to adjust the sale price if he sold through retail. If the price were higher, even the rich would not be able to afford it.

The different types of equipment Jiang Chen needed had a different cost. The Anti-Corrosive Concrete Mixer only costed 300 crystals, whereas the Graphene Cutting Bed had a price of 11,000 crystals, which was the price after a small discount from the market price.

The Sixth Street's mass produced Destroyer Rifle was sold at 20 crystals each. The efficient assault was part of NATO's standard weaponry. It used the same 7.62mm bullet as the PK200 Jiang Chen used. The gun was weaker overall but made up it in the stability category which meant it has an advantage in man-to-man

combat. Jiang Chen bought 40 of them, along with some heat sensor grenades and EMP grenades. The price offered by Zhao Chenwu made Jiang Chen quite pleased as everything was discounted by 10%. The gesture was to compensate for Jiang Chen's reduced price on the food cans.

Although titled as compensation, Zhao Chenwu didn't know that the goods Jiang Chen traded had a cost of less than 1 crystal.

All of the goods were exchanged in the storage space Jiang Chen rented previously. As to how Jiang Chen moved the canned food in, Zhao Chenwu was also surprised as he did not receive any reports related to large quantities of canned food appearing in the inner circle. Despite not having to pay taxes before trading for goods, documentation was still necessary.

Cautioned by Jiang Chen's power, Zhao Chenwu didn't say anything. Since both of them had no conflict of interest, a strong partner would only be beneficial to him.

The ability to transport goods on the mutant-creature-filled wasteland was a feat on its own. They must have special transportation technology.

Zhao Chenwu would never guess in his life that Jiang Chen brought the food back from a parallel world.

Despite the good being exchanged at the Sixth Street, Jiang Chen didn't want to make a trip down every single time. He would have no time to do anything else except to trade goods. Jiang Chen

didn't have any concerns as he drew a line on the full-sensory map. It was the safe underground sewer map he explored.

The usage of the underground sewer system as a mean to trade goods was common in the apocalypse. This world's Wanghai city had a robust drainage system that made the tunnel wide enough to pass a car. It would only take some modifications along the way with some of the alley passes blocked to build a golden highway for trading. The only drawback was that the tunnels were not entirely compatible with the ground routes, therefore not every survival base had the privilege of using this kind of trade route.

Zhao Chenwu was ecstatic when he heard that an underground sewer tunnel connected with Jiang Chen's base. He gladly took on the deed to modify this route. Jiang Chen didn't want to owe a favor, and since the intention of trade was to benefit both parties, Jiang Chen also provided 1,000 crystals to fund the project.

Modification work was not complicated. A few pieces of high-density polyethylene and aluminum compound boards would seal all alleys in the tunnel. This type of material was not only light but also durable. Even vicious mutant creatures like the Death Claw could not destroy it. Both parties controlled the entrance of the tunnel. Zhao Chenwu sent out his force to secure the tunnel at the Sixth Street side whereas Jiang Chen was responsible for establishing a station on his side. This ensured the safety and security of the route. The exits were entirely blocked to prevent any bandits from entering the tunnel.

In the future, the traded goods would be exchanged near Jiang Chen's end of the tunnel. The original plan stated that, at the

beginning of the month, a trade would take place. Jiang Chen was responsible for providing 1,000 meat cans and 10,000 pieces of compressed crackers along with an ordered list. Zhao Chenwu would bring goods based on the list and offer a 10% discount from the marketplace. Jiang Chen also promised that as long as Zhao Chenwu acted within the conditions of the deal, he would only conduct food business with him at the Sixth Street.

Additionally, because Zhao Chenwu has underground transportation vehicles with a strong protective force. It was natural for him to take care of the shipping.

As to if Jiang Chen should worry about Zhao Chenwu's possible ill intention with his private force?

The idea was that no one foolish enough would be able to rise to a position of power to where Zhao Chenwu was now. No one would kill the cash cow. Especially since Jiang Chen was only a supply station, the actual production facility may not even be in this province. He didn't have the capacity to explore through the entire wasteland. The closer to the city center, the more dangerous the zombies were. The further away, the mutant creatures ruled the land.

He wouldn't risk the possibility of being impeached by the Sixth Street to gamble on known profits with unknown possibilities. Only addicts gamble.

He was afraid that bandits would target Jiang Chen's base and even suggested defense treaties, but Jiang Chen graciously refused.



It was unfeasible because even if his safety were guaranteed, there would always be a set of eyes watching him. It would be impossible to “import” goods. If he magically created goods, it would without a doubt cause suspicion.

After the completion of the trade, Jiang Chen not only acquired all the necessary products and equipment, he had 210 crystal left over. Zhao Chenwu without hesitation ensured Jiang Chen he would deliver everything to his door. Jiang Chen didn't refuse the proposition.

The storage dimension's size was limited. Since the production equipment was large, it would be unsafe to travel through the underground tunnel multiple times.

The negotiation was successful. After he had managed to sign a big deal like this, Zhao Chenwu was ecstatic. He extended an invitation to Jiang Chen to visit the Sixth Street's industrial area and his properties inside. Jiang Chen gladly accepted the invitation as he came along with his personal ride.

The ambitious leader that possessed one-tenth of the Sixth Street. How much power does he possess here? Jiang Chen was curious to find out. Since his partner wanted to show off his power, Jiang Chen had no reason to refuse.

# Chapter 37: Industrial Area

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“This is my firearm factory. Several hundred workers are working for me, and they send these small metal pieces to the good or the bad guys. Let’s not go inside. The temperature is unbearable.”

The sentence sounded a bit conflicting.

Zhao Chenwu pointed at the in production firearm factory as he proudly explained to Jiang Chen. His gesture was no different than the modern world land developers.

“This is also my factory, but this place specializes in complex equipment such as stationary cannons. Those things mounted on the inner circle wall are produced mostly from my factory.”

They walked in front of a much smaller building compared to the previous one. Zhao Chenwu pointed at the place as he lit a cigarette.

Apocalypse was no stranger to the cigarette. Alcohol could not be mass produced due to the shortage of food, so cigarettes became the choice of substance to alleviate pressure.

The tobacco here had a pungent smell, and not everyone smoked it. The radiation brought uncontrollable mutation to all organisms on this planet, but not all mutations were harmful. This tobacco for example, like any other mutated plants in the apocalypse, was well adapted to the soil condition on the wasteland. It could be

grown without highly specialized techniques, which is one of the reasons why cigarettes were relatively cheap in the apocalypse. A lot of survivors would grow a few in front of their homes due to its recreational and medical value.

Jiang Chen naturally was not accustomed to the pungent taste. Zhao Chenwu laughed at the fact. Then, he signaled to him to not worry about it, and that he could throw it away if he didn't like it. However, it was relative. When Zhao Chenwu took Jiang Chen's Zhonghua (a top end cigarette), he felt the taste was too light to entertain himself.

“Oh? I am also interested in these automatic weapons, would Mr. Zhao be willing to sell me a few?” Jiang Chen saw a worker in a white uniform adjusting the half man-sized big machine with his tablet. The cannon rotated 360 degrees, aimed at the target inside the room, and unleashed its firepower.

“Haha, of course, that's not a problem. However, these don't get produced very quickly. Added by the fact that the Sixth Street is currently upgrading the northern inspection station's equipment, it would be at least two months before it can be produced. Mr. Jiang would have to wait.”

“No problem.” Jiang Chen smiled without being too bothered.

The two of them walked side by side in the highly advanced factory. The female assistant Su Lei following behind them, as she carried Zhao Chenwu's suitcase. The workers along the way saluted as they passed by which made him feel like a person of importance doing the tour.

Honestly speaking, as he took a trip to the factory, Jiang Chen became increasingly shocked by what he saw. There were magnetic hovering drones the size of a Frisbee, and half-built two meters high power armors.

Just like Zhao Chenwu said, the production rate of the equipment was extremely limiting. This was because military factories and related facilities were first target choices during the war. To obtain a civil production line was relatively easy, but to acquire a complete military production line were nearly impossible.

Including the power armor that was being produced, the majority of the equipment were being built by hand. Jiang Chen saw a worker use a tool similar to hammer to form the shape of the armor at high temperatures, and another worker carefully installed the microelectronic chips inside the armor. Perhaps all these production steps were done by high precision automatic production lines before the war, but in the apocalypse, a lot of things must be done by hand.

Of course, the missing production processes were for more complicated equipment. The production line for bullets was relatively easy to acquire. Despite limitations, the survivors still possessed a tremendous amount of firepower. Regardless how hard the zombies' head are, a single bullet would solve the problem. Even for the Death Claw, who could rip through the power armor's outer protection layer, tanks still existed as its natural predator.

A question was apparent. With all these powerful equipment, the

human still can't conquer the bloodthirsty mutants and zombies?

He thought about this point and was silent. He was curious as to what existed in the city center.

“Part of this equipment will become my private force, and part of it will be sold to the Sixth Street military or other interested buyers. However, the power armor is usually not permitted to be sold. The spider tank and other heavy equipment are also prohibited. With the exception that the Sixth Street Council approves the military purchase through voting, my factory would then began to produce the complicated equipment.” Zhao Chenwu did not seem to notice Jiang Chen as he rambled on. The words were meant as precautionary measures as it would be difficult if Jiang Chen wanted to buy a power armor.

“Hmm? So Mr. Zhao is considered a firearm merchant then?” Jiang Chen got rid of all the questions in his head and smiled.

“Somewhat. I still have a pharmaceutical factory, and I also operate some fixed assets within the inner circle. If Mr. Jiang is interested in buying a house in the inner circle, I would be of great help,” Zhao Chenwu inhaled the cigarette as he said with a welcoming smile. He then grabbed a bracelet shaped like an armguard and gave it to Jiang Chen.

“Mr. Jiang is often out venturing, this nitrogen armor will be my gift to you.”

“Appreciate the gift.” Jiang Chen didn't reject the offer. He wore

the bracelet on his arm before he looked at Zhao Chenwu, eyes full of questions.

How do you use this?

Zhao Chenwu signaled to the soldier that tested the equipment by the side. The soldier saluted and jogged to the middle of the separation chamber.

The soldier deployed the nitrogen armor in his hand as the dense gas surrounded him in thick turbulent waves. The bracelet in the middle spread the dense gas into a semi-hemisphere shape.

At that moment, a heavy machine gun appeared in front of the soldier as the pitch black barrel spat out waves of bullets.

The excellent sound insulation of the separation chamber made it impossible to hear any noises inside. Jiang Chen was surprised to discover that the moment the shots came in contact with the nitrogen layer, the bullets all bounced off. The soldier standing behind the shield still remained in a half standing position and looked like he didn't even receive the impact of the bullets.

Holy! This is a protective barrier.

“Using the atomic vortex effect that forces the nitrogen to create a high-pressure circulation around a center point... Haha, the scientists can go figure the theory part out, I only care about the end result. Is Mr. Jiang satisfied with this?” Zhao Chenwu waved

his hand to signal the end of the experiment as the machine gun disappeared.

“Satisfied, extremely satisfied. Is there any limitation with this equipment.” Jiang Chen fidgeted with the bracelet before putting it on.

“Not really, except the power consumption is quite high. The vortex equipment in the middle may overheat. One crystal is enough to initiate this equipment for one minute. The equipment will overheat with ten seconds of usage. After a period of usage, the used crystal would be higher than the cost to produce it. Also, it is not effective against laser and particle weapons, but it is quite exceptional against bullet weapons.” Zhao Chenwu let out a smoke ring as he explained.

“I didn’t imagine Mr. Zhao’s factory has the capability to develop weapons,” Jiang Chen exclaimed.

“Haha, of course, but this thing doesn’t sell that well as not a lot of people can afford it. However, my scientists have been working to integrate this device onto the power armor to see if it can be useful as a part of it. Let’s not talk about this anymore, the scientists can take care of these headaches. Haha, like what I said before, I only care about the end result.”

After they had left the factory, Zhao Chenwu took Jiang Chen to the pharmaceutical plant for a tour. Except the plant was rather small, so there was not much to be seen. Apparently, the genetic vaccine produced from this place accounted for 30% of the Sixth Street’s market share. Some other vaccines were also among the

popular choices on the wasteland, such as steroids and blood makers.

After a tour of everything, the two returned to the front door of the ghetto.

It was the same labor market manager called Wang Yi. The moment the bold and fat guy saw Zhao Chenwu, he dashed out and saluted in the most exaggerated fashion. His look was comical but not annoying. The fat man had his ways as he managed to live comfortably in the apocalypse by flattering and kissing a\*s, not many could manage to pull it off.

Zhao Chenwu didn't waste a single word as he glanced at his personal assistant Su Lei before continuing to bloat with Jiang Chen. Su Lei took out a piece of paper and handed it with professionalism to Wang Yi. Wang Yi carefully took that piece of document and promised that he would take care of it. He ran back into this office and took out a stack of paper.

“Choose whoever you want, these are all excessive labor without work. You don't need to worry about the possibility of stealing other factory's worker.” Zhao Chenwu waved his hand as Su Lei gave the stack of documents to Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen had made the agreement of 30 people with Zhao Chenwu already, and he promised to pay 20 crystal per person. It was included in the price of the goods they already exchanged.

The official price for the criminal was one crystal, the other 19 was based on the cost of Jiang Chen's demand to install the latest insurance system. Zhao Chenwu didn't make a single crystal in



this deal as he sold it at cost to Jiang Chen. Compared to the potential profit of the trade agreement, he didn't care about the small gains and losses. The latest insurance system was far more exceptional compared to the electronic bracelet. It used nanosurgery to install microchips at the neck of the criminals. If anyone betrayed or resisted, Jiang Chen could immediately activate the destruction program in the chip, and the betrayer's head would fly off like a soccer ball. Although cruel, Jiang Chen was not ready to risk his own life for the sympathy of irrelevant people.

At the same time, the chip was equipped with a lie detector, GPS tracking, visual sensor, and neural shut off system. The criminals would have no privacy nor the ability to betray. It was far more advanced than the electronic collars. Though of course, it came at a hefty price too.

However, Jiang Chen was an understanding guy. As long as they have no ill intentions, he didn't mind letting them enjoy a much more comfortable life.

"Haha, let me know if you see anyone you like, they will be "deported" because they possess terminal illness." Zhao Chenwu only needed to open his mouth before he decided the fate of this group of people.

The feeling of power was an excellent feeling.

Jiang Chen had the pile of resumes in his hand as he flipped through everything. The resumes lacked bullsh\*t compared to the modern day ones and explicitly stated the person's worth. A special

examination, using an artificial intelligence's testing system, was done to objectively determine a person's abilities. For example, if one possesses computer knowledge, the artificial intelligence would divide the knowledge of equipment into five levels.

Construction major, or mechanical major. In the Sixth Street with an excessive workforce, without an exceptional skill, it would be impossible to find a job. At the firearm factory that Zhao Chenwu didn't even want to step in, everyone was a mechanical scientist on the production line.

But to Jiang Chen, these guys were far more valuable, and he terribly needed their help.

The advanced technology specialist comprised of one-third construction, mechanical, and chemistry applications and technologist made up the remainder of the choices. Individuals with special abilities were prioritized, for example, people who could cook would be considered by Jiang Chen.

Subsequently, people with good body conditions were prioritized since upgrading the mansion required labor.

Lastly, families were considered first because people part of a family have a unique sense of belonging and connection. Jiang Chen would not have to worry about their loyalty. Also, he didn't want to take care of people's hormonal needs.

Jiang Chen handed the chosen resumes to Su Lei and the professional female assistant headed to the ghetto with the 30

resumes in her hand.

Zhao Chenwu had already arranged everything with the manager of the ghetto as the group of people were gathered quickly before they were taken to a quarantine room. They used the excuse, testing for diseases, but all the reports were already forged. All 30 of them were diagnosed with the X1 virus and were then taken to a room to have the microchip implemented.

Human rights? That's a joke, there were no human rights in the apocalypse.

The moment they received the nutrient supply from the survivor base, their freedom no longer belonged to them.

Jiang Chen didn't rush to see the people he selected. Instead, he returned to the inner circle. Zhao Chenwu put Jiang Chen's ID on the inner circle whitelist, which meant he no longer needed to pay a one crystal entrance fee. Although the tax was not a huge amount, it was a friendly gesture.

The purchased individuals were placed as supplies and were guarded by Zhao Chenwu's own force into the underground sewer system. They headed for the arranged trade point and waited for Jiang Chen to accept the supplies at that point.

Despite the fear that may be going through the individuals' heads, Jiang Chen accepted Zhao Chenwu's invitation to have dinner together. On the dinner table, the Sixth Street boss constantly flattered him, which made Jiang Chen quite amazed by

the power of money. Regardless of age, money talked.

In the end, he only needed to consider how to expand his power to preserve the cake in his hand.

# Chapter 38: Slave Arrangement

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The next day, Jiang Chen checked out from the Paradise Island Hotel. He then said goodbye to Zhao Chenwu before beginning his journey back home.

The underground sewage system's restructuring plan had already started. A few military personnel from the Zhao Corporation had already occupied the entrance. The busy construction vehicle, along with the workers with polyethylene boards, demonstrated the emphasis Zhao Chenwu placed on this trade route.

Soldiers with full combat gear saw Jiang Chen approach and signaled him to stop. After verification of gene ID to identify that Jiang Chen was a person of importance to the boss, the soldiers saluted and stepped aside to allow Jiang Chen to pass.

Although they worked under a corporate structure, the private forces already possessed military discipline and capability that made Jiang Chen gain a better understanding of the Sixth Street's ability. On the surface, the civil-military was protecting the safety of the Sixth Street, but the real forces were the private forces of the capitalists. The civil-military acted more like the police.

If these soldiers faced the Roshan, it would be an easy fight, unlike last time.

The actual construction of the underground sewage system has yet to begin. Jiang Chen jumped on top of the mold covered concrete floor. His surroundings were pitch black. He opened his

tactical flashlight as well as the three-dimensional map on the full sensory computer. After finalizing the direction, Jiang Chen headed home.

The atmosphere felt repressive.

After the civil soldiers had taken them to the quarantine room, a bad feeling sprouted from everyone's head. The examination that they all acquired X1 virus has rectified their suspension. Then a few people in white coats that looked like doctors ordered soldiers with genetic medication to pin them on the bed. After they had regained their consciousness, everyone's neck felt oddly sore.

"All of you have been injected with the slavery microchip. I don't think I have to explain further. You'll be taken to your new owner in a bit, you pigs." Cheng Weiguo still clearly remembered the cold and condescending gaze. To the Sixth Street, the unemployed were pigs that wasted food.

It was a conspiracy.

But no one resisted.

They were no longer new to the survivor camps. After they have accepted the aid, freedom is only a mere wish. If they didn't work, they would receive one nutrient supply a day. This would only prevent them from starving to death, but a few had died anyways.

All of them huddled in a circle as six soldiers in black combat gear

stood by the side. Some have guessed that the Zhao Corporation purchased them, but with the supplies stacked beside them, it only made them feel like they were part of the items sold.

"Honey, did they do anything to you." Cheng Weiguo worriedly held his wife's hand.

"No, I lost my consciousness after they injected tranquilizer. I feel the same way as you guys, only a bit sore in the neck," Zhou Jiexi wanted her husband to remain calm as she gently held his hand and answered softly.

"The couple should spend some intimate time together. Maybe we will be sold as slave labor somewhere. The man will work, and the woman...hehe," A middle-aged man opened his mouth, and he said grinning.

"What the fu\*k did you just say?" Cheng Weiguo felt the tremble from his wife's hand as rage filled his chest. He furiously glared at the man.

"What, do you want to fight?" The middle-aged man drowsily yawned as he pointed at the back of his neck. "Come, I won't fight back. Let's see if you die or I die first."

Slaves are the private property of the owner. If a fight broke out between slaves, the usual consequence was that both parties would be executed in public. The private forces have already noticed the disturbance, and they pointed their guns to deter the fight. These people were properties of the boss' valued friend. If anything

happened, they would receive punishment.

Cheng Weiguo clinched his fist but had to let it go. The other slaves saw that nothing happened and all lost their interest without paying more attention.

Suddenly, the private forces all moved. The six of them lined up and saluted to a young man. They got on the small moving vehicle and then left.

What does it feel like to be stared down by thirty pairs of eyes?

It didn't feel like anything special, especially when he knew he controlled their life. The apathetic feeling to life felt particularly real.

Jiang Chen let out a breath as he got rid of the uneasy feeling from his mind. He didn't want to become a cold-blooded politician. He wanted to be a wealthy man who lived a lavish life.

Unambitious is not a terrible way to experience life.

However, to accumulate wealth on this chaotic piece of land, he must have the necessary forces. If he weren't a rich man, he would just be a prey. If he met Huizhong Mercenaries again, he would fall victim again.

Force and deterrence were necessary, and he must get used to them.



He recollected his thought as he scanned through the jittery figures and slowly let out a long breath.

"Okay, look at me. I will be your future master," Jiang Chen clapped his hand as he shouted.

His voice echoing through the dark sewage system had a strange feel to it.

"I know you guys all have a lot of questions in your mind, such as if you would be used as a lure or carry a weapon to go fight in the front line. Fortunately, I can guarantee that it won't happen."

Jiang Chen sensed that everyone let out a sigh of relief. The thirty heart beat related indicators have all decreased on the EP.

A pleased smile appeared on his face before he took another deep breath and spoke out.

"You guys are lucky because I am your master and I believe you will experience that shortly. You work for me, and you won't starve. I can even let you guys live a wealthy life as you have never imagined before. However..."

At this point, Jiang Chen gradually slowed his voice down and purposely lowered his voice as he added a sullen chillness to his tone.

"I am a kind and sympathetic person, but the only thing I cannot forgive is betrayal. You all know the microchip installed at the back of your neck. For me, you have no privacy at all. For traitors, there is no punishment other than death. That's all."

His words of certainty transmitted through the pitch silent underground sewage system. The frightened, fearful, and worried pupils dilated as they didn't dare to make a sound.

Afraid? That's right! That's what he wanted to instill in their heart.

Carrot after stick, he knew that these people would be obedient. He was aware that the moment they smelt the first bowl of congee after so many years, these frightened and uncertain people would immediately praise him as the second god.

"What are you all waiting for! Grab everything and let's go home!" Jiang Chen waved his hand as the slaves stood up quivering and lifted all the supplies.

He climbed out of the exit. After he had ensured the safety of the surrounding, he lowered the hook and cables down. People below hooked the supplies up and lifted the stocks one by one. The production equipment were all disassembled and stored in boxes; assembling can be done in the mansion.

He led the slaves with packs of supplies as they carefully traversed through the deserted streets full of lifeless zombies. Jiang Chen finally saw his mansion, or "dirt fortress".

He pressed the doorbell. Quickly, a graceful figure jumped into his firm embrace as she hugged his neck.

"Did you pick up girls?" The cat-like eyes gazed at Jiang Chen as Sun Jiao examined him top down.

"Shouldn't the first sentence be I miss you?" Jiang patted Sun Jiao's back with a bitter smile. This girl was even naughtier. An audacious girl transforming into a caring woman?

"You haven't answered my question yet." Sun Jiao smirked as she drew a circle on his back with her finger.

"I swear to God, no!" Jiang Chen raised his hand and swore. At the same time, he added a sentence in his mind.

[If the robot doesn't count.]

Although her sixth sense made Sun Jiao a little suspicious, Jiang Chen didn't smell odd so she quickly let it go.

After she had kissed Jiang Chen again, she began to order the slaves on the side to move things into the mansion. Then started to plan on how to settle these slaves.

The grass field in front of the mansion was circled out and used to build temporary tents for them. The small traveler-sized tents

were purchased with Zhao Chenwu and could barely fit two people. Due to the limitation of space, they would have to squeeze a bit, but it would still be better than sleeping outside.

Of course, there were still rooms in the mansion, but Jiang Chen wasn't kind enough to let these strangers live in his home. Even if they have no ability to fight back and kept a clean record in the ghetto, he still had trust issues. Without the proper loyalty and allegiance, Jiang Chen could only treat them as strangers.

Yao Yao understandingly followed Jiang Chen's instructions and brought a giant pot. She dumped half a bag of rice along with an ample amount of water. Then she added some cabbage leaves and some ground pork into the pot with two spoons of salt and a small spoon of gourmet powder.

She opened the natural gas and started to cook in the giant pot.

After a giant wooden spoon had mixed all the ingredients, Yao Yao tiptoed to cover the pot.

She sniffed and adjusted the fire before waiting quietly for the congee to cook. Although she didn't understand why Jiang Chen would make such a delicious meal for the slaves, she would support his decision regardless of the motive.

[Brother's sympathetic look was handsome.]

Perhaps it was the fire, but Yao Yao's face blushed in redness.

Slowly, she was getting to the age where she had her own fantasy..

# Chapter 39: Jobs and Responsibilities

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When bowls of congee mixed with cabbage leaves and ground pork were brought to the table, everyone gulped at the smell of delicacies.

Hungry eyes stared fixedly at the table; if not for the slavery microchips, they would have dashed at the food like monsters.

Jiang Chen was happy to see their expressions. These people were his slaves, but he would rather treat them as employees as long as they were obedient like now. As long as no one dared to rush for the food without his permission, he was satisfied.

Gulp...

Jiang Chen glanced at Sun Jiao beside him with an awkward smile. Even this foodie gulped at the sight of the food. He lowered his voice and said, “Didn’t you just eat? Why are you hungry?”

“None of your business.” Sun Jiao threatened him with a flash of her teeth before she averted her gaze with a blushing face.

She wasn’t necessarily hungry, but she was driven by an instinct for food.

“Ahem, what are you guys waiting for? Time to eat.” Jiang Chen signaled that they could eat with a smile on his face.

His voice was like a heavenly melody to them.

When Jiang Chen said the word “eat,” almost all of the slaves wanted to profusely thank him.

These refugees were law-abiding people which meant they were easy to control. They needed only two meals a day to survive, and even without the deterrence of the microchips, no one was foolish enough to have ill intentions when they saw Jiang Chen’s generosity; a fool would never have the ability to find another fool to scheme together anyway.

Of course, as a method of deterrence, the microchips did an excellent job.

“Don’t rush and eat slowly. If you’re not full after twenty minutes, then you can line up again to have another bowl. Of course, if you dare to overeat and puke it out, I’ll make you eat everything you vomited!” Jiang Chen stood by the giant pot as the slaves one by one went up and carefully used a ladle to pour congee.

“That’s disgusting,” Sun Jiao whispered by Jiang Chen’s ear.

“I can’t let these people who haven’t seen rice before waste it, right?” Jiang Chen quietly replied with a shrug.

“This meal consumed two pounds of rice, two pork strips, and three cabbages. A lot of the food in the basement was brought out

to exchange for supplies, and as for the rest...”

The stored cans of food were used to trade, and the cabbages and perishable rice were originally supposed to last the three of them for a month. Now that thirty people needed to be fed, the food in the basement was nowhere near sufficient. After all, Jiang Chen bought those at the supermarket, so the quantities were small.

“Stop, these things aren’t even worth mentioning where I come from. I’ll go again soon to bring more back,” Jiang Chen responded with a bitter smile. At the same time, he was planning to rent a storage space in the rural area and use a food distributor to purchase some non-packaged food.

Using sandpaper every time was too much of a hassle.

But this audacious Miss Sun Jiao was becoming more of a homemaker. The dissatisfied pout in her eyes at his “wastefulness” oddly made Jiang Chen feel a rush of emotion.

The more this girl transformed into a civilized person, the more attractive she became.

Jiang Chen touched his slightly burning nose and stopped peeking at the side of her face.

The mansion was no longer empty like before and with this many people, he had to be aware of any intimacy.



When he saw the completely cleaned out bowls accompanied by eyes that were still frightened but now held a hint of gratitude, Jiang Chen coughed as he signaled for everyone to look at him.

“Are you guys full?”

No one responded.

“If you want to eat tomorrow, then you better answer all of my questions.” Jiang Chen narrowed his eyes.

“Yes!” Everyone hesitantly opened their mouths.

Jiang Chen nodded his eyes, pleased.

“Excellent. Hearing your response makes me confident that I’m not raising a bunch of mute pigs. The way I speak may be offensive to you because you guys are nothing to me! Thanks to me, none of you have to starve anymore, and this is a comfort not many can imagine. Therefore, you all have to prove your worth! Prove that you’re worth the three meals you eat every day!

Yes, I will provide three meals a day. But don’t be too happy yet. People slacking off are not included! I don’t want to be your master because that means I have the responsibility to feed you. Instead, I want you all to consider me as your boss. You are my employees, but the consequence of being fired is quite high. I don’t think I need to explain any further.”

Not a single person argued against his words.

To a person who offered them food without torture, they felt only gratefulness. As for what to call him, they didn't care even if Jiang Chen made them call him daddy; they would do so without any hesitation.

Dignity? That was for people who weren't hungry.

Also, as a civilized individual, Jiang Chen treated them with some respect for his personal reasons. If they were cute girls, it might have been acceptable, but the thought of this bunch of men calling him master only gave him goosebumps.

And most importantly, he didn't want his inner self to change from hearing the title "Master."

After everyone finished eating, Jiang Chen adjusted his mindset and continued to speak.

"Rome wasn't built in a day's time. You all are the first ones to join me in building my empire! I'll bring order and prosperity to this lawless land, and you must contribute to my vision and in return, I'll continue providing the food that ensures your survival. That's enough from me. From tomorrow on, everyone has work to do. Clean up the bowls after yourself. Whoever's name I call, stay behind. The rest can go back. Remember one thing, the mansion is a restricted area. If anyone enters without my permission, they will be killed immediately."

His last sentence rang out with a deathly chill.

He monitored the thirty heart rate indicators in his EP, and he nodded with satisfaction. Without any abnormal stimulation, the heart rate would not fluctuate, which meant that they don't have any strange thoughts.

Everyone brought their bowls with them at their dismissal and headed to the sink with Yao Yao's guidance. He was thankful for the automatic water treatment system which provided them with city-wide safe and clean drinking water in the post-apocalypse.

Everyone whose names were called stood quivering in front of Jiang Chen. They didn't know what their master would make them do.

“Zhou Jiexi.”

“Yes.” Zhou Jiexi gently bit her lip as she bowed down to Jiang Chen staring on the ground. She had a husband who loved her dearly. To be truthful, she was afraid that Jiang Chen would require some disdainful need from her. If that was the case, she couldn't resist. For her husband's life, she would shamefully accept.

She was clearly thinking too much. Although she was rather attractive, Jiang Chen wasn't into married women, and he especially was not interested in forcing anyone.

Also, Miss Sun Jiao was standing beside him.

“You all don’t have to be so afraid. I won’t eat you guys,” Jiang Chen said as he shrugged at the two males and two females. He then asked the wife, “Do you know how to cook?”

“Mhmm.” It was an odd question, but Zhou Jiexi truthfully nodded. As a qualified wife, of course she knew how to cook. It was just that ever since she woke up from the hibernation chamber with her husband in the survival base, she hadn’t seen rice in a long time.

“You’ll be responsible for the food of these thirty people. I’ll give you a menu in a moment.” After he finished, Jiang Chen didn’t bother to look at Zhou Jiexi’s expression as he flipped to the next page. “Wang Qin.”

“Here!” The timid girl with freckles was frightened by Jiang Chen’s voice.

“This is not elementary school. You don’t have to say here, just say yes.” Jiang Chen gently smiled at the peculiar gazes of the four people before getting back to the point. “You’re an accounting major. Therefore, you’ll be responsible for the supplies in storage. I’ll give you a copy of the key, and I need a record for every supply’s usage. This is an important task, and I cannot allow you to make a mistake. Do you understand?”

“Understood!”

Great. Although the voice was a little weak, it certainly showed her determination which pleased Jiang Chen.

Her timid personality made him especially satisfied with his choice.

“Lu Huasheng.” Peanuts? Jiang Chen almost burst out laughing at such an odd name.

“Yes.” A responsible-looking middle-aged man cautiously nodded in response.

“I heard you were the chief developer of Huajian Real Estate?”

“That was before the war.” Lu Huasheng smiled bitterly.

“I don’t care when it happened, I only need you to redesign this base for me. That’s right, I want to build a survival camp far larger than Sixth Street. I’ll need you to draw a layout plan with the mansion in the center and expand the radius of the base by two times. The design of the wall, where to put it, how much material is required, and the survivors’ building—I trust you know these better than me. I want to see the result by tomorrow at six o’clock.”

“I need a full sensory computer and a memory card,” Lu Huasheng cautiously said. “For drawing purposes.”

“Here you go.” Jiang Chen said without even blinking. Jiang

Chen purchased a bunch of these cheap, second-hand equipment that littered the Sixth Street.

“Okay, that’s it. You three can leave now.”

The ones released let out a breath of relief as they looked compassionately at their companion left behind before they quickly left with their bowls.

“Hehe, boss, what about me?” The person remaining was a middle-aged man with a pair of glasses. His figure was rather lean, meaning he was unable to do any physical labor. He saw that Jiang Chen didn’t say anything which made him uncomfortably scratch his head as he asked in a timid voice.

The other three people were all assigned tasks to complete, but this young boss didn’t give him any instructions which made him quite afraid. His mind began to wander to see if he did anything wrong to upset the boss.

# Chapter 40: Game Development

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His anxiety was unjustified as Jiang Chen's voice was calm and gentle.

But to Du Yongkong's ears...

"I like the title boss." Jiang Chen smiled as he pulled out a resume and cut straight to the topic. "Du Yongkong, age 30, male, computer major, previously worked as the chief technology officer at Walkman Technology. Is this correct?"

"Yes..." Du Yongkong carefully answered, uncertain about the meaning behind Jiang Chen's words.

"That makes things easier then." Jiang Chen got right to the point and threw a Huawei phone to him. "You're going to develop an operating system for me on this thing. It shouldn't be that difficult for you, right?"

"Eh?"

"This is an order. I want to hear you answer with certainty." Jiang Chen didn't waste time with any bullsh\*t. He bought these people to work for him, not the other way around.

"Yes, yes." Du Yongkong quickly nodded without any attitude that indicated his former executive position at a top company. Such a laughable dignity had long vanished in the cruelty of the

apocalypse. Jiang Chen now controlled his life, and his only option was to serve him.

When Jiang Chen saw Du Yongkong's perplexed look, he smiled and walked over to pat him on the shoulder. He didn't care about the overwhelmed expression on Du Yongkong's face as he continue to explain.

"You don't have to be reserved. Do a good job, and I won't let you down."

"I understand, Boss." Du Yongkong sensibly lowered his head.

Jiang Chen nodded before he continued, "I have some requirements. Let me know if you have any difficulties, but you'll have to solve it, understand?"

"Yes."

"Good." Jiang Chen was pleased with Du Yongkong's certainty. "I don't know about operating systems, so I only care about the results. I need you to develop an operating system that has two times the processing power as this system called Android. At the same time, don't change any of the requirements so that it remains compatible with all Android and iOS system software. Ask me any questions you have right now since you won't be seeing me a lot. I want to see a reliable result by next month."

Finishing, he handed him an iPhone that was also brand-new.



Du Yongkong took it and fiddled around on the screen for a bit before a forced smile appeared on his face.

“What? Is this too difficult for you?” Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows.

“No, this is too easy.” Du Yongkong waved his hands in denial. He was afraid that his boss would fire him for this kind of easy job that didn’t exist even before the war.

“Hmm? Then explain.” Jiang Chen was quite curious.

Du Yongkong adjusted his glasses as he displayed the phone with the air of a professional before he started to explain.

“First, this old operating system should be a product from 150 years ago. The hardware operating efficiency as well as the human-computer interactive design are full of flaws.”

“Oh? You’re saying that the human-computer interface of the iPhone is bad?” Jiang Chen couldn’t help but laugh at the statement.

Du Yongkong snuck a look at Jiang Chen’s expression and when he saw that he wasn’t angry hearing about the flaws of the two operating systems, he began to explain more in-depth with renewed courage.

“Regarding hardware operating efficiency, although the logic seems faultless, there exist unnecessary areas. To put it simply, a logic that can be covered with just one plus one, due to the limitation of the programming language as well as the algorithm, becomes muddled when the processor must do some unnecessary actions. For example, by defining A equals one, B equals one, and then calculating C equals A plus B to output C equals two as the final result. This old processing method not only wastes memory, but it also decreases the operating efficiency of the equipment tremendously.”

“Oh? Then how will you take care of it?” Jiang Chen asked curiously.

“This is an easy fix. The ultimate problem lies in the limitation of the programming language. Although both systems have its pros and cons, they can’t escape the boundary of the lower level programming language. If D++ is used to program it, some small adjustments to compatibility will solve the problem. The antique known as the phone would have its operating efficiency increased by threefold, and the power consumption would also be cut in half. At the same time, because the drain on the hardware is lessened, the hardware life would also be extended for a prolonged period.”

Jiang Chen gasped for air.

This was ridiculous! The hardware operating efficiency increased by three times? Could it also be compatible with apps from both systems? These two features alone were already insane. That meant that even with a terrible phone, they could easily run games previously available only on the iPhone. This system would start a

revolution in the phone gaming industry!

Phone game developers spent an endless amount of effort to decrease memory usage. To optimize the game, they often had to remove features that enhanced gameplay and catered towards the general audience. But if this operating system was introduced, everyone's phone performance would increase by three times! At that point, the creativity of developers could be fully unleashed, free to create worlds of imagination that could run on every computer. It was a technological revolution. iOS and Android would never be able to compete.

“Regarding human-computer interaction, I recommend maintaining the status quo since I'm already accustomed to this interface.” Jiang Chen paused. Even if he controlled this man's life, he didn't want to expose his identity to someone who had yet to prove anything.

“Trust me, Boss, my design will be much more advanced than this ancient human-computer interaction method.” This former chief of technology officer was a different and more zealous person when touching on the topic of technology. “Yes, using the touchpad to perform human-computer interaction is still mainstream even to this day, but this ancient operating system is inherently different from the operating system used by present-day entertainment systems.”

“What's the difference?” Jiang Chen asked curiously.

“Artificial intelligence!”

“Artificial intelligence? Can you create it?” Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows.

“If it is basic artificial intelligence, I’m confident I can create it in a month’s time since all the data is stored in the library’s database. I only need to transfer it.” Du Yongkong patted his chest.

“If artificial intelligence isn’t difficult, then why isn’t it on the full-sensory computer?” Jiang Chen asked with some confusion. If it was so effective, there was no reason to not use it on the full-sensory computer.

“Hmm, that’s because the Artificial Intelligence Act prohibited the development of artificial intelligence. If everything was given to machines to do, everyone would be unemployed.” Du Yongkong shrugged. “The artificial intelligence operating system was popular for a time before it was replaced by an equally impressive neural operating system. Before the war, artificial intelligence was only limited to the nuclear power plant, the water treatment plant, and other government-run infrastructure.”

“I see. You talked about basic artificial intelligence. Are there no risks?” Jiang Chen voiced his worry of the artificial intelligence programs potentially mutating within the modern-day world’s internet and developing into a malicious program. He was reminded of the movie <I, Robot> that portrayed a world ruled by artificial intelligence.

“Boss, you are worrying too much.” Du Yongkong sighed,

guessing at Jiang Chen's concern. "The program is fundamentally a stable program. Even if they were intelligent, they could never possess emotion or desire. At a basic level, it can only be what you've programmed it to do. Its intelligence responds to what you've taught it before. For example, if you hit it, it will not fight back. Its interest is neither hurt nor would it sense any danger. Unless you specifically tell it 'if someone hits you, fight back.' Only in this case would it respond with an action. Self-coding is something only intermediary artificial intelligence possesses. As for emotions, that's something only advanced artificial intelligence would have. Even before the war, it was a theoretical concept."

Artificial intelligence was fundamentally a more advanced program.

Only after hearing the explanation did Jiang Chen finally feel relieved.

"Okay, you'll be fully responsible for everything. You're free to try anything you want. Also, you have to keep in mind that you must ensure the security of this system! I don't want to hand this phone to someone only to have them crack the entire operating system and create something similar."

Security was of the utmost concern. Jiang Chen didn't want to see the operating system he brought over to be cracked into an open source within a few days. Especially if the D++ language was exposed, he would not be able to explain it.

The best way to program it was to have it be like a black box that only exchanged information with an external source but did not

accept any data extraction.

Du Yongkong hesitated for a brief second before he smiled and promised.

“Boss, don’t worry! The program I develop will not be easily cracked. Walkman Technology Corporation’s games were all secured by me. Take <Star Storm 7> for example. It released before the war, but no one in the world has been able to crack the game yet. For an operating system of this level, this is a piece of cake to me.”

This certainly seemed to be the case.

If someone in the modern world had the ability to crack software made by the chief technology officer from 150 years in the future, it meant that he was also a time traveler. Jiang Chen would do anything to kill him, but of course, such scenario would be impossible.

“Good, if you can do it, it’ll be an outstanding achievement! Work hard; I promise you’ll be able to eat meat every meal!” Jiang Chen laughed as he patted Du Yongkong’s shoulder.

Hearing about the meat, Du Yongkong was ecstatic. He would never have dreamed of this before. With a taste of the rewards, Du Yongkong immediately reaffirmed that he would finish in no time. It was no surprise that he used to be in management; he was technically skilled but also masterful in kissing ass. Jiang Chen didn’t dislike such clever people.

“Lastly, for Future Technology’s logo, make it look cool so that people think it’s futuristic , but don’t overdo it.”

“Yes! Boss!” the guy belted out.

Jiang Chen nodded his head, pleased at Du Yongkong’s confidence. He waved his hand to signal him to leave.

The cheerful Du Yongkong carried both phones and walked away. Of course, before he left he also remembered to take his bowl. Instead of labor work, he could work in his old field. For many years, he hadn’t dared to imagine this kind of happiness.

But it became a reality on this day.

Grateful for the opportunity given by Jiang Chen, Du Yongkong mustered all of his determination to create a product that would stun the boss! Although the technology was ancient, the boss liked it, and the best way to rise up the ladder was to do things that the boss liked. He didn’t care about Jiang Chen’s purpose, he only needed to complete the task.

# Chapter 41: The Developing Fishbone

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Fishbone Food Corporation

With a crooked fishbone symbol pinned on the mansion's main door, the new survival camp was born on this piece of wasteland in Wanghai City.

In the morning, the fatigued survivors woke up to a delicious aroma.

It was the smell of food.

Zhou Jiexi wore a white chef apron as she cooked congee with cabbage and ground pork in a pot. The survivors meekly lined up to obtain their breakfast rations.

Even in their wildest dreams, they wouldn't have believed that they were given breakfast.

Only when full would they have the energy to work, which is why Jiang Chen didn't skimp on food expenses. Although nutrient supply would sustain them, once it hit the stomach, it felt sour without providing enough energy. Regarding the survivors' menu, he asked for advice from Zhou Jiexi before he made a reasonable meal plan.

Congee in the morning, rice at noon with a large serving of a side dish, and for dinner, the same as lunch except with occasional



noodles instead of rice.

Also, people who made exceptional work progress would receive points. The points structure was implemented by Jiang Chen after careful consideration because he understood the concept well. It rewarded outstanding work based on construction progress to promote similar standards. With these points, the survivors could exchange for instant noodles, crackers, or even canned food luxuries.

Jiang Chen temporarily gave Lu Huasheng the responsibility of distributing the points and then reporting it to the storage manager Wang Qin to confirm. They were set to receive one point per day. The cook Zhou Jiexi was awarded based on the quality of the cooked food, and as for Du Yongkong, Jiang Chen personally took care of his points.

Food was worth little to him.

But for the people who previously endured the pain of starvation, it was a severe understatement to say that Jiang Chen was generous.

God, this must be heaven, is what almost everyone was thinking.

After quickly finishing breakfast, everyone gathered in the empty front yard. Excluding the people with assigned roles, everyone else followed Jiang Chen's order to separate into groups of four. The individuals specialized in construction acted as the team leaders for their task in building the base. Lu Huasheng, who had severe

dark circles, took the full sensory diagram that he completed overnight and explained tirelessly to the team leaders.

Some teams were responsible for producing the anti-corrosive concrete while others were focusing on the nanotubes used for the body of the wall. The nanotube poly-material used to construct the wall was at least two times stronger than a normal concrete wall.

The building team silently took the construction materials and snuck outside to avoid alerting the zombies. Slowly, they stretched out the metal wire separators. Another group shot the zombies with the metal wire separators and dragged the bodies away to burn—this was to avoid possible diseases and zombies from evolving.

After hearing about Jiang Chen's base development plans, Lu Huasheng decided to use the phased method to expand the base.

The first step was to expand in the direction of the underground sewer system and control the exit to it. The construction teams would use the three-story luxury buildings outside of the mansion as the base and construct a wall around it, surrounding all of the smaller buildings within the proximity. After reinforcing the defense, they would then start building the secure corridor outwards, between the underground exit and the base wall.

The overall design philosophy was to effectively utilize the abandoned buildings in the area as well as the nanotube poly-material wall to connect them together. This transformed the abandoned buildings into natural fortifications. They could not only be used as households but also as weapon-equipped

watchtowers. After completing the primary structure, more nearby buildings could be included as well.

With a clear plan, the construction outside of the mansion was fully underway. Pleased, Jiang Chen looked at the survivors working diligently before returning to the mansion and heading towards Yao Yao's room.

—

“It's basically done. Haha, although it pretty much copied a mobile game that was popular in the year 2031, it meets most of the criteria that big brother set!” Yao Yao hopped along as she dragged Jiang Chen beside the table. She then took out the cheap phone worth less than one thousand dollars and pressed the start button.

Skeptical, Jiang Chen opened the game icon named <New Era> under the scrutiny of Yao Yao's exceedingly high expectations.

Jiang Chen was completely stunned.

This is a mobile game?!

No, it wasn't that the game Yao Yao created was terrible, but...

it was too perfect!

The combination of RPG adventure game elements and SLG

building elements meant that players could choose to become adventurers with flashy spells, characters that focused on ruling the land, or merchants exploring the seas. People could write their own history in this open world. This was not an advertisement for a poorly designed game, but the actual in-game content!

Indeed, it was an open world with sprawling maps. On computers, it would be nothing, but on the mobile platform, this would be considered a miracle in the current industry.

The game even had three-dimensional graphics.

Even if this game was built for a PC, it would be still be considered perfect.

Of all the games Jiang Chen played before, only <Skyrim> could compare.

All in all, the game's perfection made him question if the phone would even be able to run it.

“Ahem, Yao Yao, did you upgrade the hardware on my phone?” Jiang Chen asked with a bitter smile. He didn't want a game that was unplayable on all phones. Even if the game was impeccable, it was useless if nobody was able to play.

“Of course not.” Yao Yao sensed Jiang Chen's slight displeasure as her eyes suddenly became sorrowful. “Yao Yao specifically considered the phone's hardware level and used D++ language to

package the game into 256 MB with an automatic program to process when the game initiates the game—”

“Stop stop stop, I don’t understand. Just briefly explain how it works.” Jiang Chen interrupted Yao Yao’s explanation.

“Mhmm! To put it simply, even with the phone’s minimal hardware performance, it is able to support this type of massive online game. It’s just that it would be a higher server requirement because I used cloud computing inside which means that the majority of the data processing is going to happen on the server itself. Therefore, the user and CPU would not need to handle too many calculations, which also solves the security problem.”

Yao Yao proudly shook her tiny head as she continued, “To handle the calculations required, I already built a server for big brother. The specific process is written inside the document.”

Despite his inability to understand completely, he could tell that it basically used the server as a larger processor. Therefore, the user only needed to input information and extract the processed information.

“But wouldn’t this increase the user’s data cost?” Jiang Chen was doubtful.

“Hehe, Yao Yao has already considered this. The information exchanged between the server and the user is written by a special code that not only contains a lot of information but packages the data into a small file! It is significantly more efficient compared to

the games installed on big brother's phone. A day of data usage is only 10 megabytes."

10 megabytes of data was indeed minimal. Jiang Chen was shocked as any other game would have incurred a lot more data.

"So, did Yao Yao help big brother out?" Yao Yao blinked her large, doe-like eyes as she looked hopefully at the shocked Jiang Chen.

"Haha, Yao Yao, you've helped me out tremendously!" Jiang Chen suddenly hugged Yao Yao and gave this cute loli an affectionate kiss on the face.

Yao Yao's adorable face suddenly turned a dark red as she buried her head.

"Yao Yao, if you want anything, tell me, okay? I will definitely do my best."

"Hmm? Umm, anything is okay?" Yao Yao didn't know what to answer with as she stuttered.

"Mhmm! Anything, as long as big brother can do it." Jiang Chen squatted down and held onto Yao Yao's shoulder as he nodded. At the moment, he was emotional and wanted to reward this adorable girl.

Yao Yao panicked as Jiang Chen kept pressing. Her sweet eyes

looked around the room anxiously as her face transformed into a red balloon. At any moment, it seemed as though steam would come out.

“I, I want...” Yao Yao’s mouth faintly opened as her eyes looked shakily at Jiang Chen.

“You want?” Jiang Chen leaned closer towards Yao Yao and gazed carefully at her eyes, waiting for her answer.

“I want...”

In the end, perhaps it was too exciting, but Yao Yao’s head flipped back, and she drowsily fell.

Fortunately, Jiang Chen managed to catch her mid-fall to stop her head from banging into the floor.

He still didn’t know what Yao Yao wanted.

—

Taking the reprogrammed server and the game, Jiang Chen went to Sun Jiao’s place.

“You’re about to leave again?” Sun Jiao rolled her eyes as she continued to whip her SK10 assault rifle. “How long are you planning on disappearing this time?”

“Not too long. I’ll be back within one month by the latest.” Jiang Chen hugged Sun Jiao’s smooth waist. “Don’t miss me too much at night.”

“Pervert.” Although she said that, Sun Jiao didn’t look annoyed at all. Instead, she leaned up and kissed Jiang Chen on the lips. “I’ll take care of this side, so come back early.”

Sun Jiao and Yao Yao’s EPs were also installed with the slaves’ microchip managing software. Jiang Chen made the decision because someone needed to manage these survivors while he was gone. This subprogram allowed Sun Jiao and Yao Yao perform his duties as master. Although this permission could be retracted at any time, Jiang Chen trusted both of them, so the thought hadn’t occurred to him.

“If you have time in the afternoon, teach those guys some shooting skills unless it is dangerous. And also, try to establish a closed corridor between the base and the tunnel; this is critical to the safety of the trade route with the Sixth Street.” Jiang Chen explained some of the important items related to the base development. Although he could return between both worlds in an instant, once the base construction was stably on its way, he had to spend part of the effort on expanding in the modern world.

In the future, he hoped to train Sun Jiao into someone who could manage the daily affairs of the base.

Sun Jiao seemed to have realized that too; however, she didn’t



stop Jiang Chen from leaving.

Not only did Jiang Chen mature, but Sun Jiao was also growing through their relationship. Compared to the audacious girl that constantly desired Jiang Chen, she began to calmly and maturely express her love differently.

She believed Jiang Chen, and she knew he would never leave her here.

“Mhmm, I know.” Sun Jiao reached out to fix his collar.

“You’ve changed.” Jiang Chen grabbed her hands as he gazed into her eyes affectionately.

“Hmm? Am I prettier or uglier?” Sun Jiao rolled her eyes. Just as she wanted to pull her hands away, she realized that he was holding on to them tightly.

Her face began to blush.

“Of course prettier.” Accompanied by Sun Jiao’s surprised yelp, he pushed her onto the bed.

For some reason, the moment Sun Jiao fixed his collar, he fell in love. It was as though the person in front of him was his wife. This newfound feeling made his blood pump.

Or perhaps it was because he hasn't relieved himself in a while.

The door was slammed shut.

The affection in the room began to merge into the sunny morning sky.

## Chapter 42: Home

---

Still the crowded room.

He took a deep breath as he tried to savor the clean air, but a bitter smile formed on his face as he realized his nose was stuffed with dust and even on his bed that had been uninhabited for so long.

Jiang Chen examined the apartment he had spent the past two years in and suddenly felt reminiscent of his time here.

Shaking his head, he threw this emotion away.

Perhaps it was now time to say goodbye.

Jiang Chen took out his phone and called the landlord's number before he moved it two inches away from his ear in anticipation.

“Hello? Jiang Chen! That apartment, if you want to continue to rent, then you better pay half of the year's rent right now! Even if you don't want it, other people want it. I felt pity seeing you by yourself, but if it weren't for that, I would have already thrown your stuff out! Fu\*k, I called you so many times, and you didn't even pick up, you no-money b\*stard. You're playing the disappearing game with me?” Wu Jie roared his expletives on the other end, thinking Jiang Chen had no other options.

Of course, if this was half a month ago, he would have been Jiang

Chen's only chance. But now...

"You can rent the house to other people," Jiang Chen said calmly.

"What, what did you say?" His voice was suddenly surprised. Wu Jie didn't expect Jiang Chen to be so defiant and threaten to stop renting right away. "If you're not going to rent my place, where are you going to live?"

"If you continue to call me a bastard, I'll make sure you'll never open your mouth again." The landlord couldn't hear any emotional variation from Jiang Chen's voice, which remained light and calm.

Wu Jie was about to curse again, but the chill in Jiang Chen's voice crept into his mind and clogged the words at his throat, making him unable to make a sound.

Jiang Chen didn't want to spend any more effort on this dumb\*ss so he hung up. Even though the landlord had given him a lot of trouble, he didn't have the energy to care. If a dog barked at you every day, you can't bark back at him after all.

It was a waste of time and his own standards.

Of course, if this guy continued to bother him, he wouldn't mind teaching him a lesson. It was the other side's freedom to say something, but in Jiang Chen's mind, it was then his freedom to

decide how to react.

After hanging up, Jiang Chen's phone began to vibrate with notifications as his phone screen filled up with missed calls. Other than the landlord, Xia Shiyu had also called him, probably worried about the company president who had left on such a long absence without leaving any messages.

Jiang Chen smiled, but his finger soon trembled.

There were at least ten missed calls from his home.

His eyes began to tear up.

Perhaps, he should take some time to go home.

He took a deep breath as he suppressed his grief at being so far away from home, then dialed the familiar number.

"Hello? Mom, it's me."

"Chen Er, you finally called. Your dad has been so worried." The familiar yet excited voice transmitted through the phone speaker. "Old man, Chen Er called back."

"Mom, don't use that name. It's too childish." Jiang Chen smiled as he blinked his eyes.

“What’s childish? Listen to how you’re speaking to your mom. You’re not obedient anymore!” When a steady roar resonated from the other line, Jiang Chen felt relieved.

[Looks like mom and dad are doing well.]

This also made Jiang Chen feel slightly less guilty about not visiting home in so long.

In the past, he was worried about disappointing his parents’ high expectations without a successful career. Using work as an excuse, he stayed away from visiting home many times, even during Chinese New Year when he lied and said he had to work overtime.

He knew that even without success, his parents would still welcome him with open arms. But he was the one who couldn’t accept it.

Now, however, all of those concerns were gone.

[Mom, dad, your son has finally achieved something.]

Jiang Chen’s hand trembled as he smiled and responded to their reminders and advice.

“Son, it must be tiring out there. Do you have enough money? Don’t tire yourself out. This is the starting point of your career. If you don’t have enough money, let your mom know, I still have some savings.”

“No, your mom is off the mark. Our son’s key priority is buying a house! No girl will like you if you don’t own a house. Son, it’s okay to be tired. We’re men, and we can do it! Your mom and dad still have some savings. Let’s see if we can buy a house at Wanghai City with down payments. With a house, you can then bring a girlfriend back for your mom and dad. We’re waiting for grandchildren.”

“No, Mom and Dad, your son is successful now. I opened a company at Wanghai City, and I even have people working for me now. I’ll take care of the house myself, so you guys don’t have to worry! Take care of your health and don’t always think about saving money! If you want to buy something, just buy it. If you don’t have enough, I’ll get it for you.” Jiang Chen rubbed his eyes and smiled.

“You’re teaching your dad a lesson? Haha, honey, our son is accomplished now! Haha,” his father said excitedly.

“What? Chen Er, you opened your own company? Be careful, don’t let other people deceive you! I’ve seen the news recently!” His mother’s voice was filled with concern.

“Don’t worry! My son is much smarter than you!” Jiang Jianguo laughed. When he heard that his son had established himself, his heart was filled with a happiness that was greater than winning the lottery.

“After dinner, I’ll go brag with the other old guys at the door.

Our son, a university student, opened a company in Wanghai City, and other people are working for him! That's good. We can solve the girlfriend problem as well. Everyone wants to be married into a big city. Our neighbor's daughter doesn't have a boyfriend, and neither does Xia who lives in the building in front as well..."

"Your son is my son as well!" Li Xuemei argued back.

As they continued to banter, Jiang Chen gently rubbed his slightly sore eyes with his left hand. This was the feeling of home—something he had avoided.

The purest relationship in the world was family.

He smiled and thought that he should take some time to visit them.

—

After his phone call with his parents ended, he lied back onto the bed, disregarding the dust flying everywhere.

It was time to move out. He felt slight regret as he wanted to lie on the bed a bit longer.

[500 million USD. That's 3 billion RMB.]

While Jiang Chen didn't know the exact exchange rate, it was



likely around this much.

[What kind of mansion should I buy?]

He never considered this question before. A mansion, let alone a simple apartment, was something Jiang Chen had never dared to imagine.

But now this was all nothing.

Since there were areas he was clueless about, he decided to ask for some help.

He lifted his phone, but his finger froze in place.

[Who should I call?]

An awkward smile crept onto his face as he realized that he didn't have many friends.

That was fine.

After deliberating for a while, Jiang Chen sighed as dialed Xia Shiyu's number. Since he needed to call her anyways, he might as well ask for some advice at the same time.

Xia Shiyu was about to lose her mind. She was wondering where Jiang Chen disappeared to when vibrations suddenly came from her pocket. Without hesitation, she took out her phone and saw the familiar name. She was so angry that she laughed.

“Hello? Am I hearing this correctly? Our president just called me back?” The voice didn’t sound too cold; at least Jiang Chen could heard her teeth grinding.

“Ahem, I have been busy with business. That’s not the point.” Jiang Chen shamelessly changed the topic.

“Oh? What kind of business requires you to turn your phone off? Do you know the company is in the initial start-up phase? Hiring? Development plan? Is this your business or my business...”

The voice on the other side was so fast that Jiang Chen moved the phone slightly away. Xia Shiyu’s drastic reaction to his disappearance surprised him.

There were more important things at hand, however.

“... Can you go house hunting with me?”

“...” Xia Shiyu hung up the phone.

Two seconds later, the phone rang again.

She suppressed the anger in her chest as she inhaled, resisting the urge to hang up right away.

“Ahem, don’t hang up on me. I’m serious! Can you find some time?”

“What do I have to do with you buying a house?” Xia Shiyu said in an icy voice as her chest furiously heaved up and down. Jiang Chen’s playful attitude made her feel disrespected as she had been worrying about him for the past few days.

That’s right, disrespected.

After spending so much effort on something, it was completely disregarded.

“Of course it has to do with you. If you have nothing else to do, you can come and chill.” Jiang Chen said with a chuckle, completely unaware of Xia Shiyu’s feelings.

When she heard Jiang Chen’s words, Xia Shiyu paused.

Hmm? She confusedly touched her forehead and felt the unnatural temperature on her hand.

[I don’t have a fever. This is weird.]

“Hello, are you listening to me? Oh right, I’ve already finished developing the mobile game. The next step is to hire people to maintain the server. I trust that you know the hiring process better than I do, so you can take care of it. But if you need me to be at the interview, I don’t mind either. But only on the condition that you’ll go house hunting with me.”

“Okay,” Xia Shiyu agreed without considering. On after did she realize with an odd feeling how illogical and decisive her answer was.

[Must be because of work. If I don’t say yes, he’ll disappear again.]

Mhmm, that’s right, it’s because of work.]

After hanging up, Xia Shiyu rubbed her temples as she tried to justify her actions. Although even this action felt unnecessary and unnatural.

—

Done!

Jiang Chen stretched as he threw the phone to the side.

Girls were more detailed, so it was better to bring her along. Despite his narcissism, he knew too well that his taste was significantly lacking. With the developer's sale pitch, there was no way he’d be able to discern truth from lies.

He didn't wonder if he was interested in Xia Shiyu or not.

It was just that when he held his phone, the only person in this city who came to mind was his ex-boss. No, his employee now, haha.

Since he needed to buy a house, then naturally it required cash. Jiang Chen's storage dimension was filled with gold, but it didn't make sense to go buy a house with pounds of gold.

He grabbed the phone again and called an international number.

However, when he pressed the phone against his ear, he frowned.

## Chapter 43: Robert's Problem

---

The phone rang for a long time without an answer.

Just as Jiang Chen was about to hang up, someone picked up.

"Hello?" an unfamiliar voice curtly said in English.

The voice was deep and slightly scratchy—not at all like Robert.

"Jiang Chen, Robert's Han friend. And you are?" Jiang Chen used his broken English to slowly answer.

"Nick. My boss is currently in trouble... can I trust you?" Nick asked after some hesitation.

"Of course. Robert is a good guy. Even though I'm in Han, I still miss him dearly. Also, we have unfinished business." Jiang Chen dug deeply into his vocabulary to finally articulate what he needed to say.

The other side remained silent for a while before Nick finally explained the situation.

Because of Jiang Chen's terrible English, Nick purposely slowed down for him, and after a while, Jiang Chen finally understood what happened.

To put it simply, Robert went on a business trip to Iraq two days ago and was kidnapped.

With Nick's combat ability, this normally would not have happened, but the insider they worked with multiple times turned out to be a traitor; the group that came out to meet them weren't local militants but instead masked terrorists.

This was going to be problematic.

[Fu\*k, you have your gold business, but you ended up going to this ghetto place and dropped the ball at such a critical moment.]

Regardless of Jiang Chen's internal curses, however, Robert had his own reasons.

During this period of time, he planned on staying safe, but because Jiang Chen failed to follow up with him, he started to question the deal.

Did the Eastern man really have business for him? There were no other messages, so Robert decided to stop waiting and accepted the insider deal that had a "low" risk.

Curses aside, Jiang Chen still had to find a way to solve the problem.

For now, he didn't have any other routes to sell the gold for cash since it would be insane to sell 500 million USD worth of gold

without proof of ownership. He did not wish to get tangled up with the authorities.

So how about a visit to Iraq?

Jiang Chen was hesitant at first, but upon further thought, a smile appeared on his face. Perhaps it wasn't such a bad idea. With his special equipment and superman-like body conditions, he was not afraid about the possible danger, especially since he could just run away if there was trouble. Turn the corner and travel to the apocalypse for a few days, and no one would catch him.

At the same time, Jiang Chen also had other considerations as well.

If he helped Robert, not only would the gold problem be resolved, but he would also gain another backup option. Even if he had to leave the country in the future, there would always be a place for him to go. He trusted that Robert would help him out if he was in need.

Although they only met once, he could tell that Robert had a spirit that respected contracts.

This was especially critical.

If he was someone who only chased after profit without any regard to promises, then he was a waste of emotional investment. Even if Jiang Chen decided to save him, it was easier to find



another partner.

Once Jiang Chen made up his mind, he didn't waste a second as he immediately booked the tickets online to Dubai. He planned to layover in Dubai before heading to Baghdad. Since he already has his passport, all he needed was a travel visa before departing.

Once ticketing was resolved, he immediately packed and left. No longer staying at his rented apartment, he found a hotel to stay at instead. Only after taking care of the gold problem would he consider buying a house.

Although selling several tons of gold at once would be difficult, trading in a few kilograms wasn't entirely impossible. Jiang Chen, who was running out of money, retrieved a business card and called Mr. Liu at the gold store to book an appointment.

—

Jiang Chen ended up exchanging seven kilograms of gold, but since he didn't care about the decimals, he sold it for 1.5 million.

What Jiang Chen didn't notice as he left the gold store, however, was the look of greed that flashed across Liu Anshan's poker face.

The more he thought about it, Liu Anshan was certain that this guy had a special means of acquiring large amounts of gold. Perhaps by digging in graves? Or through illegal mines? Liu Anshan didn't know. All he knew was that this guy had much more

gold!

He had Jiang Chen secretly investigated. After acquiring the funds last time, he immediately spent everything. Now in less than a month later, he came again to sell more gold.

What did this mean?

It meant that he had an unimaginable amount of gold! If he came to possess it accidentally, there was no way for him to have spent it all so quickly.

As for how dangerous Jiang Chen was? Liu Anshan already had him investigated with the help of a friend.

He was just an employee at a clothing store in Shimao who ended up fired. There was no way he had any special background.

It was time to contact his brother.

When he thought about his brother, however, he was slightly hesitant. He didn't want to have anything to do with his brother, but in this case, he had no choice.

Despite his misgivings, Liu Anshan made up his mind and called the number.

"Hello? Brother? It's me, Liu Anshan. Let's cut the small talk. I

want to propose a business deal if you're interested. Let's split it fifty-fifty, but the lowest I'm willing to go is forty-sixty! No less."

His brother was Liu Changlong, the head of Hongyi Gang and a prominent figure among Wanghai City's crime scene.

Jiang Chen even had a small conflict with the Hongyi Gang before.

—

After leaving the gold store, Jiang Chen took a taxi to a rural area. He needed to rent a storage space to hold the supplies he needed in the apocalypse. Although online shopping was convenient, it was not a good long-term strategy. With thirty people now living in the base, it would be much easier to purchase in bulk from food distributors and also save on cost.

After paying for one year of rent, Jiang Chen rented a small storage space. The area around and inside had excellent privacy protection which pleased him. The rent was not expensive either for a rural area at three thousand a month.

After renting the storage space, Jiang Chen didn't rest but instead found the number of a Wanghai City food distributor online and dialed. He cut straight to the point and ordered ten tons of rice, five tons of flour, 300 boxes of canned meat, and 200 boxes of canned vegetables, as well as salt and oil. With such a large order coming in, the boss of the distributing company eagerly took the order. After getting the address, he guaranteed that the goods

would arrive within two hours, but only after paying a down payment up front.

Jiang Chen instead paid for the full amount.

Once the full amount of 160,000 RMB arrived in his bank account, the boss became frantic. He didn't know how he got lucky to have met someone this rich. The full amount had been paid without hesitation.

Immediately, he began to prepare and even personally rode the truck as they arrived at the storage.

Jiang Chen obviously realized the boss' flattering words and emphasized that if the quality of this batch was good, he would come to him the next time as well. The boss of course promised that every bag of rice was newly produced and all of the canned food were from certified producers.

Jiang Chen didn't comment and instead hinted that the next batch would preferably be without labels. The boss paused momentarily before he smiled mischievously at Jiang Chen and agreed.

It wasn't difficult for him to acquire products that way as he would just contact the people he knew at the factory. For him, it was one less step in their production.

After some small talk, the boss shrewdly left, sensing the Jiang

Chen still had things to do. After the truck drove away, Jiang Chen returned to the storage and shut the door tight. It was time to do the real business.

He inhaled deeply and looked around at the supplies that nearly filled the entire storage.

He then lit up a cigarette, which was something that he did every time he travelled between the two dimensions. In front of Miss Sun Jiao's shocked and joyful gaze, Jiang Chen moved all of the supplies into the swimming pool that had previously contained the gold.

The swimming pool was now full of food.

"I'll help you get a couple more vaults of gold," Sun Jiao blurted out after gathering her thoughts from her temporary shock. This was the only thing that came out of her mouth.

"Pshh, I haven't sold all of the gold yet. And even if you got more, I wouldn't be able to exchange it for money. Also, these supplies cost nothing there," Jiang Chen explained.

"Then why don't you bring back more?" Sun Jiao was slightly embarrassed. She tried to cover her expression with a furious look and a flash of her teeth at Jiang Chen—except in Jiang Chen's eyes, it was all harmless coquetry.

"Don't be greedy. Would you even be able to finish it?" Jiang

Chen laughed as he patted Sun Jiao's butt.

"I can. Even if I can't, I'd just leave it here." Sun Jiao blushed as she stared at Jiang Chen again.

"Don't become a little pig. Then I'd have to eat Yao Yao," Jiang Chen said jokingly.

"Do you want to die? You pervert." Embarrassed, Sun Jiao lifted her hand and hit Jiang Chen on the shoulder, but from Jiang Chen's smiling face, she could tell it hadn't hurt at all.

Of course Jiang Chen didn't mean it; he was not perverted enough to eat Yao Yao. Also, Sun Jiao's flexible waist didn't seem like it would grow fatter anytime soon.

"Oh, and find a few detailed-oriented people to scratch off the production date and the other symbols. You have to be extremely careful with this, or maybe you and Yao Yao should take care of it personally. In the future, I'll try to obtain supplies without any labels."

After repeatedly urging Sun Jiao in a few more things, Jiang Chen traveled back to the modern world.

He looked at the empty storage unit again and headed back out. He locked the door and cautiously checked to see if it was visible from the outside before he walked to the road and called a taxi to go back to the city.

In the car, he called Xia Shiyu.

—

"What? You have to leave the country? For how long?" Surprisingly enough, Xia Shiyu didn't seem too shocked by the news of Jiang Chen disappearing again. Perhaps she was used to it.

At least this time, Jiang Chen told her his plan and didn't just disappear on her without any warning. The last time, Xia Shiyu had been so afraid that she almost called the police thinking he got into an accident.

"Hmm, not too long, business-related. I'll be back in a week."

"Then what about the company?" Xia Shiyu sighed resignedly.

"Of course it's up to you, hehe."

"..." When she heard Jiang Chen's laughter, Xia Shiyu tiredly rubbed her temple.

"I stored all of the game data onto the USB drive, so I'll send it to you in a bit. You're much more familiar with the advertisement process than I am. Hehe, so you'll have to work a bit harder this time. I'll treat you to dinner after I come back." Jiang Chen felt he was becoming more shameless by the minute.

"Treat me for a week!" Xia Shiyu said angrily.

"No problem, one month works as well!" The hearty voice from the other side made her unable to vent her frustration.

She hung up and flung the phone aside, leaning back against sofa with a huff.

This guy...

If she were his boss like before...

She thought about what happened and suddenly became silent. For some reason, she was suddenly reminded of how she had fired Jiang Chen and the miserable time when she herself had lost her job. Suddenly, she felt terrible about herself.

Guilt? Unease? Self-blame?

She couldn't explain the emotion.

The back of head pressed against the sofa. She didn't know what she was thinking about and just stared blankly at the ceiling.

She liked this modernized apartment as the two-floor design really combined spaciousness with comfort. Despite her uptight workstyle, in her free time, she was someone who had a taste for a



luxurious lifestyle.

With a salary of ten thousand RMB, she spent half as rent, but she didn't feel bad about it. She believed that the purpose of earning money was to improve life quality and excessive saving only demonstrated lack of confidence in the future.

Jiang Chen also didn't expect her to pay back the loan, so she didn't have to save money for that either.

What she didn't realize until now was that while she usually carefully planned her spending, she hadn't even considered paying back her loan in her monthly budget.

She blankly stared at the intricate crystal chandelier as she remembered her time in the cheap apartment that cost 800 a month. Back then, she had to carefully plan every meal.

For some reason, a man's face surfaced in her mind, that always grinning face.

To be honest, the normally serious Xia Shiyu really disliked that improper grin.

However, she could not come to dislike the face.

With dilated pupils, Xia Shiyu touched her lips but didn't know why.

There was a throb in her heart that she had never felt before.

[What is this? Whatever, I'll stop thinking.]

She shook her head and stood up after turning off the TV.

Since Jiang Chen was sending the USB drive in a bit, it was not good to see him like this. With the thought of taking a shower, Xia Shiyu entered the bedroom and prepared clothes to change into. She then walked into the bathroom and shut the glass door.

She stared at the water coming out of the showerhead and let the clear water trickle down her flawless skin. Xia Shiyu entered a daze once more.

[Hmmm? After the jog, I already showered...]

## Chapter 44: Xia Shiyu's Apartment

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He got off at Xinyuan community as Jiang Chen walked towards Xia Shiyu's rented apartment.

The community had a lovely scenery. This girl certainly knew how to enjoy life.

The side of the road was covered with plants and trees as a curious smile appeared on his face.

The basketball court in the middle of the community had a few high school students playing a game. On the small field with training equipment, elders were practicing Taiji. Some were also playing chess under the tree. Families were taking a walk and also young people were jogging. The entire community was crowded but not noisy.

Walking into the apartment building, Jiang Chen pressed the elevator button. [This girl rented a place on the 14th floor, is she not afraid of heights.] He walked to the door and rang the bell, as he heard the sound of steps approach the door.

“You are here. Come in.”

The door opened, and Xia Shiyu with a towel in her hand showed up at the door. Jiang Chen noticed there was still a few droplets of water on her shoulder, seems like she showered not long ago.

“Are you not going to come in?” Xia Shiyu saw that Jiang Chen didn’t move and slightly raised her eyebrows, and asked confusedly.

“Ahem, yes, yes. I was just thinking about something.” Jiang Chen coughed as he recollected himself from her stunning look.

“Oh? I am going to guess it’s not work related.” Xia Shiyu shrugged and walked back into her room.

“My computer is here, put your USB in there.”

Jiang Chen closed the door behind him and took off his shoes. The moment he looked up, Jiang Chen saw her gorgeous figure.

Maybe it was because she just showered, but Xia Shiyu's body had a lingering scent of the shower gel’s fragrance. The loose pajama slightly dampened by water looked a lot more fitting as it pressed against her beautiful figure.

Especially the curve of her butt.

Jiang Chen gulped in confusion.

[This girl is not seducing me right?]

If Xia Shiyu knew the narcissistic thought in Jiang Chen’s mind, she probably would have angrily kicked him out.

The bedroom was often filled with its owner's fragrance, Jiang Chen didn't think too much about it in the beginning. However, when Jiang Chen walked into Xia Shiyu's bedroom and smelled her beautiful scent, he felt awkward. But seeing Xia Shiyu's seriousness when setting up the computer, Jiang Chen had to suppress the odd feeling.

“Ok, connect the USB.” Xia Shiyu got up and walked out of the room.

Jiang Chen ashamedly touched his nose, but when he saw the desktop filled with work related documents, he felt guilty as he quickly regathered his concentration and focused on work.

He inserted the USB into the computer and copied the folders.

Yao Yao put a lot of attention into the work as all the information relation to the game was compiled together. With this information, the application procedure to the authority would be much simpler to do.

Of course, it's Xia Shiyu that had to do it.

“Is it done? Let me take a look.”

Xia Shiyu's voice made Jiang Chen jump as he didn't know when she had returned to the room along with a chair. She sat beside Jiang Chen.

She wore her glasses with a professional look and grabbed the mouse from Jiang Chen's hand as she scanned line by line through the document about the game.

The light fragrance post-shower whiffed from her hair which made Jiang Chen a bit thirsty.

To be honest, Xia Shiyu looked absolutely gorgeous by any standards, a form of beauty that was almost unearthly. But before Jiang Chen never thought about her in this way as he just viewed her as someone who could manage the company, as well as one of the few friends he had. However, under the influence of the hormonal fragrance, even if he wanted to stop thinking about it, it was already out of his control.

They were also in a flirtatious environment.

The warm colored light and wallpaper could make anyone fall asleep, but it could also ignite people's desire. What's worse was that there was a soft bed behind them.

Bed, Beauty, in the same room.

He carefully examined the side of his ex-boss' face, it looked stunning.

Jiang Chen's breath began to shorten.

“Whoever created this game is a genius.” Xia Shiyu’s untimely exclamation interrupted Jiang Chen’s bewildered thoughts. She pushed up her glasses and continued, “It’s impeccable in every category. The usage of cloud computing to reduce the hardware requirement, at the same time not costing a lot of data. Although I am not a professional in the game development, if the game’s quality is equal to what the report stated, I can confidently say that this game will be groundbreaking in the history of mobile games.”

“Ahem, of course, I hired someone professional to handle the game design aspect. We’ll focus on the operation of it. Also, the game server requires specialized equipment. There is instruction along with it, just give it to the specialists to take care of.” Jiang Chen pretended to cough as he tried to cover up his peeking act. He recollected his thoughts and refocused on work.

“Hmm? Did you bring the server?” Xia Shiyu lightly frowned as she looked confusingly at the PC sized equipment in her room.

“Of course I brought it. I put it behind the door, and you didn’t notice.” Jiang Chen rushed to explain.

He remembered after he came into the room. So he brought it out from the storage dimension after she went into the living room.

Xia Shiyu didn’t persist with these trivial details as she nodded before asking a few more questions related to the game. Jiang

Chen did his best to explain and stated that all the information should be in the documents.

“I’ll organize the information out which will take around two days. Although my experience in this is nearly zero, after the extensive period of study, I should be able to...”

“I trust your ability.” Jiang Chen interrupted her with a smile.

Jiang Chen’s look of trust made Xia Shiyu’s face feel hot. When Jiang Chen was smelling Xia Shiyu’s fragrance, she also sensed the smell from Jiang Chen’s body.

Don’t be mistaken as it was not body odor. Instead, it was a unique hormonal scent. Just like the fragrance in her room, Xia Shiyu couldn't tell, but Jiang Chen as the opposite sex could clearly detect this unique aroma.

The speed of her heart beat increased which made Xia Shiyu a little frustrated and nervous. Although she didn’t dislike this kind of feeling, she felt embarrassed by not concentrating on her work.

Yes, embarrassed. She always worked diligently and was proud of the very fact.

“Mhmm, I won’t disappoint your expectation.” A stiff tone.

Jiang Chen sensed that Xia Shiyu’s facial expression was a bit rigid as he felt uneasy as well.



[Did this girl figure out that I peeked at her?]

Of course, he thought too much.

Xia Shiyu had her reasons for showing such an expression.

“Also, I have some recommendations for the company site. If we want to get the company on track sooner, let’s take care of these things as early as possible.” Xia Shiyu opened an office rental site with listings of empty offices.

“This, the Continental Building Floor 12. It is near the subway, and all the necessary services are near. The price is also reasonable. Take a look at the pictures and see what you think.” Xia Shiyu skillfully opened the image below and showed Jiang Chen.

The work atmosphere has erased some of the flirtatious feelings out of the air, even Jiang Chen became focused.

Of course, he still didn’t really know what he was doing, even if he focused.

“Then this one it is.” Jiang Chen scratched his face. He thought that he probably wouldn’t go into the office very often, so he didn’t care about where it would be located.

“Aren’t you going to compare it to the other ones? This one too,

although the ease of transportation is not ideal, it is near the universities which would make the hiring process a lot easier. For a small and new company like us, it's hard to attract experienced professionals to jump ship and join us.

“What do you mean a small company, where’s your confidence?” Jiang Chen rolled his eyes as he said unsatisfied.

“Now that I see the president is so confident, I am also very hopeful for the company. Then the company location will be...”

[This girl is becoming more skilled at handling me.] Jiang Chen thought.

To be fair, it is great to have an assistant. No, she is the CEO. Whatever, it is all the same.

Jiang Chen decided to choose the office near the University.

For no other reason than that the building was only six stories high. He hates high places.

If he told Xia Shiyu the real reason, she would have been shocked.

The rent was 2000 RMB a month. She could take care of the remaining items tomorrow, and Jiang Chen even assigned her to do the renovation.

“Don’t save money for me, I’ll invest another ten million RMB in a few days, let’s do something magnificent.” When Xia Shiyu asked how long the term of the lease should be and what’s the budget for renovation, Jiang Chen waved his hand and replied, "Ten million?" Once he takes care of the gold, one hundred million will be nothing.

“Let me be honest, if the game is already developed, the only thing the company needs to take care of is operation and maintenance. So we won’t need this much funding within the short period of time,” Xia Shiyu replied with a bitter smile.

“Haha, who said we can’t use it? I told you before that we are going into the phone industry. Once the phone is developed, iPhone and Samsung will all be giving their market share to us.” Jiang Chen recklessly laughed.

For the president's brazen laughter, Xia Shiyu only rolled her eyes and didn’t respond. She didn’t think Jiang Chen had the capability to do so. Even if he did, ten million was nowhere enough for development and production.

But Jiang Chen didn’t react to her rolled eyes.

Yes, iPhone 6 was a fantastic product, but it was nowhere comparable to the technology from 100 years later. It doesn’t even have to be 100 years later. Jiang Chen just needed to ask the starving technology genius to improve those “ancient” communication products and release them. Ahead of the market

by 10 years would be enough for all the competitors to chase after him.

Also, he must ensure that the phone won't be replicable so that his “hard work” won't be stolen. He doesn't want to see any knock offs of Future Technology.

The key technology should be patented. The phone would have to come later as the short-term focus was going to be placed on software.

“Also, can I know where you are going to be in the next few days? Which country are you going to for business?” Xia Shiyu had hesitated for a moment before she interrupted his envisioning.

“Hmm? Iraq,” Jiang Chen carelessly spilled out the truth.

Iraq.

Xia Shiyu almost choked on her own spit.

What kind of business required him to go there?!

# Chapter 45: The Iraq Trip

---

"Food, yours."

His English was more broken than the Eastern Man.

A terrorist with a masked face and an AK47 placed a bowl of muddy looking soup and black bread on the table. He mocked the white man who crawled into the corner before he turned around and slammed the door.

Robert weakly moved when he saw that the man left. He quickly walked to the table and grabbed the rock hard bread.

His blond hair was already greasy, and his face looked pale, but his eyes remained bright. Even if he didn't know what's the soup or the hardly chewable bread in his hands was made out of, he didn't look the slightest bit remorseful.

He chewed carefully, despite the fact that the food was barely edible.

But he knew that this would maximize the amount of energy he had and would preserve it. Then, he could seek the opportunity to escape.

Robert's face did not look distressed at all. Even if the poor reporter that stayed beside him yesterday was screaming in pain, he remained calm.

Without a doubt, that guy must have his throat slit and recorded. The majority of the government would not compromise with the terrorist groups and pay ransom for the hostages. Maybe in a couple of days when he heads back, he could see that poor sucker on Facebook, in the form of video, if he could go back.

This was not the first time Robert faced situations like this. Militants in Kuwait kidnaped him and almost slit his throat. But the good thing was that Blackwater International took the money and did some good deeds with the American army. They managed to save him at the absolute last moment.

However, this time it was far more questionable. Although he was an American citizen and acted in the interest of the country, recently his act of smuggling oil from Iran has caught the attention of the FBI. Rumor has that special agents were collecting evidence in this area. Maybe due to this insider's betrayal, this was the FBI's act of taking him out, then why would the American army save him?

The bald Biden had no guts. If the FBA just threatened him a little, he would join the witness protection program and sell out his old friend.

Robert was not too angry at this. He had seen his fair share of betrayal. If he died here this time, then Biden was lucky, but if he managed to return to Los Santos, hehe.

A ferocious smile flashed across Robert's face.

Of course, all this talk would be nonsense because his probability of survival was so slim. Although Nick was reliable and a fitted warrior, he was alone after all. Facing a group of fully equipped terrorists would be unrealistic.

Especially in hostage rescue, that must be done with one swift action.

He mocked at himself for the thought as he finished the last bit of bread before lying on the bed again.

His instinct told him that he would be okay this time. His instinct had saved him on more than one occasion, so he trusted his instinct and didn't give up the hope for survival.

—

Jiang Chen got off the plane and stepped into the Baghdad International Airport.

The religious city was not exactly as they described it in the news, in constant chaos. At least, not near the airport.

The marks left by the war has been slowly healed through the passage of time. It was also evident by the constant flow of foreign tourists. However, he knew this prosperity was limited.

IS already occupied half of the area in Northern Iraq. Even if the sky above Baghdad were still clear, it wouldn't take long before a gloom of war cast its shadow.

Jiang Chen in shades stood in front of the airport for a while before he took out his phone to check Google maps. He quickly found the arranged meeting spot with Nick.

Just as he was about to call a taxi, an unlicensed car stopped in front of him.

"Sir, do you need a taxi?"

It was in Han, although not fluent.

"Yes, do you know Han?" Jiang Chen was surprised. He had paused for a moment before he opened the car door.

"It's because I often find jobs near your wells, for example servicing PetroChina workers. So I learned Han in the process." The young man smiled with his white teeth exposed as he skillfully started the car. "My name is Ehsa, what about you sir?"

"Jiang Chen. Head to this place on the map." Jiang Chen showed the location on the map to Ehsa.

"Okay."



With the changing scenery passing by him, Jiang Chen chatted with the taxi driver, who was around the same age as him and he heard some interesting stories.

"Sir if you are here to travel, I recommend a few cities in the South. However, don't head north as Haditha is almost conquered, it might not be long until Baghdad is unsafe too."

"Hmmm? Looks like you know these things pretty well. How long have you been doing this?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"For about six years, I have been driving taxis ever since I left the army. I also spent some time being a tourist guide," Ehsa replied.

"You have been in the army before? I feel like you are no older than me," Jiang Chen asked with confusion in his voice.

"I enlisted when I was 12, in what you guys call the Iraq war." Ehsa shrugged as the topic did not seem to bother him. "A hectic show without even seeing the enemy. It was over before it started. I just felt like Saddam gave me a gun and sent me to surrender in the front line."

He was amazed by the young man's experience but didn't continue on the topic further.

The car soon arrived at the destination, and Jiang Chen generously handed a 10 USD bill to him. He watched the car leave as he stretched and looked for Nick.

"Here." Just at that moment, the foreigner sitting under the shade, drinking coffee, waved at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen sat directly across from Nick. But before he sat down, Nick hastily began speaking.

"Just yourself?"

"Yes." Jiang Chen grabbed an empty cup and poured himself a cup.

It was bitter, seems to be authentic Turkish coffee.

Jiang Chen took a sip before putting it down and noticed Nick's slightly disappointed look.

"Hmm? You seem disappointed?" Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows.

"You are an adamant warrior, but with just the two of us, it is going to be difficult," Nick replied with his voice lowered.

"I am not just strong, you'll see." Jiang Chen shrugged. "Where is your weapon?"

"It's in the car. Do you need me to prepare one for you as well?" Nick saw that Jiang Chen came empty handed and asked.

"Not necessary, I have prepared my weapon already. I believe that you already have clues about the whereabouts of your boss, let's find him then. Hehe, he still owes me a deal," Jiang Chen smiled and spoke with a relaxed voice as if he never viewed these terrorists as real threats.

Jiang Chen's relaxed mood made Nick frown slightly, but since there were no other options at the time, it would be dangerous to be delayed by even a day.

Soldier's instinct told him that this guy was not to be underestimated, but he was not certain of his exact level.

"Let's talk about the exact details on the car. Robert is in great danger. If you saw the news yesterday, you'd know that IS already executed an American reporter. If they don't receive the ransom by tomorrow, they might kill the hostage."

Nick lit up a cigarette and handed Jiang Chen one as he took Jiang Chen to his car.

"Your boss can't afford the ransom?" Jiang Chen lit up the cigarette.

"IS wanted the UA government to pay," Nick said emotionlessly.

The meaning behind that was evident.

The car started as Nick took the wheel and headed out of the town. They passed by two inspection stations, but it was rather procedural as the stations let them go when there were no bombs found. The assault rifle hidden under Nick's seat was not detected during both inspections.

On the way, Nick explained what kind of trouble they encountered this time.

It was about five days ago, Robert accepted an old friend's invitation, Biden, to come to Iraq. It was a military arms deal worth twenty million USD. The buyer was supposed to be a militant fighting on the front line against IS. Order from the UA middlemen and acquiring additional firearm was the unspoken rule on this desert. Although Robert sensed something was off, he was not too suspicious.

It was a deal over twenty million USD. He would earn one million just by working with him.

Biden was such a great guy.

After he arranged the transportation of military arms on the battlefield between the government militants and IS, he met a bunch of extreme terrorists screaming "Allah Akbar."

Nick was indeed a great warrior as he used an M27 to kill at least 10 fearless terrorists, but that was useless.

To acquire those arms, the IS with "secret information" sent out at least a battalion of forces and was equipped with heavy machine guns and RPG. He almost didn't get out of there alive.

The firearm fell into the hands of the IS, and Robert was captured. Nick fought fearlessly to find an escape path to the safe zone.

Of course, that doesn't mean he would leave his boss there, Robert saved his life before. He knew that the only way to save his boss was to escape himself first.

He stayed in Haditha as he had a feeling that IS didn't bring IS into their territory. The next day, he received a phone call from someone who picked up a ten dollar UA bill. On the bill, it said, "If you call this number, and tell him where you found the bill, you'll receive one hundred dollars in compensation." Nick first thought it was a trap, but it was his only hope. After meeting the man, Nick paid him the compensation and followed him to where he picked up the bill.

It was fortunate that it was not a trap, Robert was cunning. He always hid a ten dollar bill in his shoe as he believed the first finance minister of the United States would bring him luck and riches. At the same time, it saved him in critical moments. It was clear that "Hamilton" saved him.

"Why don't you contact the embassy? The American soldiers are all experts in hostage rescue," Jiang Chen said in a relaxed voice.

"It's the FBI who's behind this all. Those fools can't find evidence, so they wanted to get rid of Robert." With the cigarette in his mouth, he already put his shades on. Jiang Chen couldn't see his facial expression.

"Oh? I thought Robert represented the UA government." Jiang Chen shrugged.

"He did in Iraq, but it happened in Kane which is not related to the Iran problem," Nick briefly answered the question as he turned the wheel and drove off the road.

It was clear that Robert trusted his bodyguard as he even explained these things to him.

Jiang Chen remembered that Robert told him about smuggling oil before. It must be that he left some evidence and the FBI is after him.

"We are not going on the road?"

"There is an IS station in the front, we can't pass. Also, we are almost there." Robert calmly drove the car into an alley and shut the engine.

Jiang Chen opened the door and got out. He looked around and figured it was a ghetto. Occasionally a child's malnourished head popped out of the window and curiously looked at the two foreigners. But a hand would come and drag the children back into

the room and tightly shut the window.

"These civilians are quite sensitive about the war." Jiang Chen smiled as he threw the cigarette bud onto the ground.

"The moment they were born they started to experience the war." Nick grabbed a backpack under the car seat. He saw Jiang Chen's relaxed look and raised his eyebrows. "Are you sure this is okay?"

"No problem, trust me." Jiang Chen sighed.

"In Iraq, Han Kungfu is not that particularly helpful."

"In your foreigners' eyes, do all the Han know Kungfu?" Jiang Chen laughed at the remark.

I should show him something.

Jiang Chen's right hand reached behind his back and opened the storage dimension. In Nick's eyes, he just reached, and a pistol appeared in his hand.

Nick was shocked as he didn't even sense Jiang Chen hid the gun. He also did not recognize the gun.

"This gun is?"

"11 Tactical Pistol, custom made, don't worry about it." Jiang Chen put the gun into his bag and shrugged.

Nick nodded as he no longer questioned.

Just like that, Jiang Chen followed Nick and walked to the building where Robert was held.



## Chapter 46: Rescue

---

"There's one on the roof, four standing on the second floor, and five out front." Nick stretched out on top of the roof and used a pair of binoculars to observe the target structure. "Robert is confirmed alive."

The three-story tall building had at least ten terrorists on site. Nick began to worry for Jiang Chen as even for someone like him, it would be nearly impossible to rescue someone without alerting nearby guards.

However, if they alerted the guards on patrol duty in the streets, then they must face the attack from an entire town of IS soldiers.

"Affirmative, just cover me when I back out." Jiang Chen stood by a fruit store picking fruits as he occasionally glanced at the IS soldiers passing by. He had a head scarf on his head with only his eyes exposed.

It was exciting for him.

He opened his mouth and took a deep breath before turning into an alley.

He noticed that there was no one around, so he took out the bag Yao Yao gave him from the storage dimension and equipped it onto himself.

The drone from the future was going to be useful now as an odd smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face. He connected his EP onto the palm-sized circle disk.

The bottom of the drone slightly vibrated followed by an almost undetectable noise as it followed Jiang Chen's instruction and flew into the air.

It carefully avoided the sight of the guards as Jiang Chen cautiously controlled the drone to fly over the wall onto the top floor. It recorded the heat map of the entire building as all the guards appeared on the EP map. After he had parked the drone on the top floor, Jiang Chen gave an order to Nick.

"Take out the scout on the top floor."

"Affirmative." Nick naturally noticed Jiang Chen's drone and was surprised by Jiang Chen's ability. He zoomed in with his M27 rifle.

The silencer lightly buzzed.

A blood hole appeared on the terrorist's forehead. As he was about to fall over, the drone hidden behind him popped a hook and carried his body to the middle of the roof and slowly released him.

Not a single person noticed.

Nick was completely stunned. He saw the Indago drone that the UA special forces used in Kane and he thought that represented the

peak of the drone technology. But when he saw the palm-sized drone, his understanding of field was challenged.

Silent enough to move behind the target and its hook powerful enough to drag the body.

This was the first time he saw a drone that agile and discreet.

[His country's military technology is this powerful?

Or is Jiang Chen representing an unknown force?]

Nick didn't understand, but he didn't need to understand.

He knew that his boss could be rescued now.

—

Jiang Chen used the image generated through his EP to determine the guard's distribution within the building. He took a deep breath and moved to the side of the building.

He pressed against the ground, for the first time using all his strength in the modern world.

Jiang Chen hopped two meters high, grabbed onto the roof of a small building and rolled beside the water tank.

It was a smooth move.

This was the muscle and reflex two times stronger than ordinary people. He gradually clinched his fingers and looked at the street across.

It was three meters wide with little traffic.

Eight meters away from the roof, with a height difference of two meters.

"How far is the closest patrol from this place?" Jiang Chen used the communication device in his ear and asked.

"Two streets," Nick answered after he scanned the area.

"I am about to enter, watch out for me."

"Understood." Nick put the binoculars aside as he reloaded the M27 rifle.

—

Fury!

Red dots began to pop up in Jiang Chen's vision. Even the wall

cannot stop the vivid red from appearing, it belonged to the color of hearts beating.

The desire to rip the hearts apart.

All the cells in his body were boiling.

He inhaled and tried to suppress the negative emotions from his mind as he slightly bent his knees.

If it were two times his muscle strength, it would be questionable, but now it was four times.

Abruptly, he pushed his legs down onto the ground and stepped back before he dashed across the eight-meter distance, grasping onto the roof of the third floor.

[Fu\*k, this hurts.]

The fury strengthened his muscle but not his bones. The shock from the impact with the wall made him grind his teeth together, but he managed to overcome the pain and initiated the tranquilizer on the EP.

Fury disarmed. His heartbeat returned to normal.

"What is it?" A terrorist looked out the window and scanned for any irregularity.

"Don't know, let Zayev go take a look."

Jiang Chen held his breath as he pressed against the wall. He didn't understand what they were saying as he prayed that they won't look up. Jiang Chen was right above the IS soldier. If he got caught, then he would have to fight a violent battle.

He wasn't afraid, but Robert's safety would be jeopardized.

Jiang Chen's sudden move shocked Nick as he didn't suspect Jiang Chen to jump across.

[An eight-meter distance, two-meter height difference?

Superman?]

Nick didn't let his guard down when he saw Jiang Chen sneak into the building, his rifle aimed directly at the head stuck outside the window. If he looked up and saw Jiang Chen, Nick would have to kill him. Stealth entry would become a battle.

Fortunately, it seemed that it was inconvenient to look up while wearing a hat, the terrorist didn't see anything odd, so he retracted his head. From common sense, no one could jump onto a building.

Jiang Chen was relieved as he rolled onto the roof.

The reason why he dared to use brute force to jump over was not that he didn't think it through. Instead, when fury was activated, he saw the distribution of the people in the room. He estimated that the risk of being spotted was small, so he decided to use four times the strength of a regular people and jumped over.

First, silence device.

NATO special forces equipment, he purchased at the Sixth Street Junk Yard for 30 crystals. The device could silence up to a radius of ten meters. Although not as useful in the apocalypse, but quite handy in the modern world. It can be activated for 15 seconds.

He laughed and took out the device from where Nick couldn't see. He pressed the device against the roof. He then started the drone and made sure the IS soldiers were unaware before he rotated the silent device's button.

Buzz.

It produced a sound of buzzing electricity. The surrounding air became unstable under the unique field, all sounds were erased.

The brick roof was exploded open with dynamite.

Jiang Chen did not hesitate as he took out his pistol and jumped into the room.

Future tech was indeed powerful, no one noticed the violent

explosion.

With both feet on the ground, Jiang Chen saw Robert in the corner. He ripped off his headscarf and smiled.

"I can't believe you are the one saving me, my friend," Robert said with a bitter smile.

"Oh? Are you disappointed?" Jiang Chen shrugged with a joking voice.

"No, I appreciate your help." Robert stood up and genuinely bowed down. "If there is anything I can assist you with in the future, please don't hesitate to tell me."

"You still owe me a deal."

Robert was confused for a brief second before he smiled.

"Not just a deal, my friend."

Jiang Chen didn't continue talking with him. He retracted the silent device and walked to the door. Robert surprisingly looked at the pistol in Jiang Chen's hand. For as long as he has been in the firearm business, he never saw a gun like it.

As well as the silent explosion.



But Robert didn't ask, everyone had their own privacy. It would be impolite to ask.

If he could rescue people, it won't be hard to kill people.

"Nick, the hostage is rescued. Cover me," Jiang Chen spoke into the communication device.

"I understand," Nick replied emotionlessly as a cruel smile appeared across his face.

[You bastards, I'll kill you all.]

He opened the safety.

He locked onto a terrorist that looked like a commander and pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The blood hole penetrated through the target's head as he dropped down onto the floor.

"Enemy! Enemy!"

"It's the Americans! Quick!" But what they didn't know was, the one firing was a Byelorussian, and the one rescuing was an Eastern

man.

Shouting noises resonated through the door, as well as the explosive firing of the assault rifles.

Jiang Chen monitored the outside with the drone.

Nick was indeed an experienced soldier. A single rifle was enough to suppress all the IS soldiers. The screaming bullets accurately penetrated through flesh and ended their sinful lives one by one.

Nick managed to control the soldiers around the building. Jiang Chen waved at Robert signaling their retreat. He aimed his pistol at the wooden door.

Bang!

The wooden door was slammed open. A terrorist screaming a foreign language rushed in with an assault rifle and met a pistol in his face.

Boom!

With a hole in his forehead, the man dropped dead.

"Instincts, don't worry about it," Jiang Chen joked with the shocked Robert before he rushed out.

Instinct? The drone's instinct.

"Wulahualala..."

Jiang Chen replied to the nonsensical screaming with a bullet. Although the 11 tactical pistol was only a pistol, it was technology from 100 years later. Despite the same size bullet, the material of the bullet as well its accuracy was far superior compared to modern weapons.

Although it was a pistol, it could easily shoot through the brick wall.

The highly penetrative bullet made the IS soldiers around the stairs not dare to come close to the wall. But as they continued to hide, it troubled Jiang Chen as well. Since this is an IS-controlled territory, there was no way they could escape if this dragged on.

Time to try the thermal detection grenade.

A grimace appeared on Jiang Chen's face. The thing he got from Zhao Chenwu, the firearm dealer from the apocalypse.

He popped the switch and threw the grenade away.

The grenade in midair suddenly paused as flames began to spit out from one side. It was as if it had eyes, it flew directly at the IS soldiers around the stairs.

They didn't even have time to duck down.

The grenade exploded as soon as it detected heat.

Boom!

The explosive chips destroyed the entire staircase. Jiang Chen could almost sense the violent explosion.

"God, what are these things?" Robert hid behind Jiang Chen's back as he blankly stared ahead.

"Some new gadgets. Stop talking, follow me." Jiang Chen changed a clip and rushed to the stairs.

Thermal detection grenade. Those things were slightly pricey being five times the price of a regular grenade. It was only useful on humans and would be interfered by the cheaper EMP grenade or heat bait, so they were not as useful in the apocalypse.

All the sudden, the wooden floor crashed open on the side.

"Allah!" A man with an assault rifle dashed out and tried to smash his gun against Jiang Chen's head.

But he did have a reflex of 29, so he would not get hit by a surprise attack like that.

A violent stream of air ripped through Jiang Chen's arm as the almost liquid phase nitrogen slammed onto the man's chest like a hammer.

He flew away like a bomb and smashed against the wall.

[Should be dead.

Damn, this thing could be used as a close range weapon.] Jiang Chen pleasingly looked at the metal bracelet on his arm.

Robert stared dumbfoundedly at him. Jiang Chen glanced at him, and half-jokingly said.

"I guess you are going to keep the secret for me, right?"

Robert continued to stare dully, but he nodded.

[God... is this a Hollywood movie.]

Jiang Chen was pleased by Robert's reaction as he signaled for him to follow and rushed downstairs.

He was not afraid of Robert not keeping the secret, no one would believe some of the things that happened.

Especially if he were smart enough, he would shut his mouth.

# Chapter 47: The Unexpected

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"Jiang Chen, get out. IS' patrol squad already noticed the disturbances on this side, and they are sending backup." Nick's voice transmitted from the communication device.

"Understood." Nick waved at Robert and shouted, "Quick! Start running."

Before he finished his sentence, Jiang Chen dashed out of the building and fired into the sky. The gunshot dispersed all the confused civilians. At the same time, he called Robert and headed directly into the alley.

"Dam\*it! There are heavy machine guns." Nick cursed as he quickly began to move. His position was already exposed when they cross fired.

The Toyota pickup truck carrying heavy machine guns drove through the streets and headed for the building where the hostage was held. The soldier on the pickup truck called the other soldiers while forcefully opening the switch, preparing to shoot.

Tatata!

The bullets fired like rain drops, quickly suppressing Nick's position which forced him to get on the floor and crawl to the stairs. He then jumped up and fled downstairs.

The IS soldiers were not to be taken lightly as the ten person patrol team carried their assault rifles and moved towards Nick's location with the intention of surrounding him. However, as a seasoned veteran, he stepped back and shot with his M27 while moving back to the car.

On the other side, Jiang Chen used his EP to control the drone and avoided the chasing IS soldiers as they passed through the crossfire zone harm free.

"Quick! Get in the car! You drive!" Jiang Chen opened the door and pushed Robert in. He then flew the drone in Nick's direction.

"I have been surrounded, you guys leave first." Nick gritted his teeth and glanced at the wound on his left shoulder. He fired a few rounds with one hand and then ran into another alley.

Although he remembered the layout of this place, his knowledge was nowhere comparable to the IS soldiers that regularly patrolled this area. Nick already accepted his fate, or else he should have already died in that small town in Kane.

He would have repaid the favor.

A grimace smile appeared on Nick's face as he slammed against the dug-outs beside the road.

He decided not to run anymore. He wanted to teach these bloodthirsty hounds who was the real warrior!



"Six o'clock direction, go through that alley, quick!"

The voice from his headphone made him pause for a brief second before he clenched his teeth and followed Jiang Chen's direction into the alley. Almost at the same time, he caught, with the corner of his eyes, a Toyota pickup truck that just ran across where he was.

A drop of cold sweat rolled down his face as he immediately followed Jiang Chen's instruction and moved.

"There is a fruit store, go in it, there's a back door in the room." Under the guidance of the drone, all of the IS's movements were exposed.

Although it was the complete opposite direction as the car, Nick chose to trust Jiang Chen's instruction. He kicked open the wooden door as he disregarded the screaming woman, the frightened man as well as the innocent children. He threateningly held his gun up and then with quick strides he aimed at the back door.

Slam!

Nick used his right shoulder, slammed open the door and got on another street.

"Cross the street and go into the alley before you make a left

turn."

The sound of IS soldiers' footsteps and shouting resonated from afar. Nick resisted the pain in his shoulder and carried his assault rifle across the street.

The footsteps were moving away. It looked like they lost him. Nick let out a sigh of relief before he took out the bandage. He wrapped his wound while running. Under Jiang Chen's direction, he quickly got back to the car.

"We have to hurry, there are more and more IS soldiers coming in this direction." Jiang Chen helped Nick open the back door as he sat in the front passenger seat.

Robert sat behind the wheel as he started the car. Nick ripped off his shirt and changed into a shirt that he previously prepared to cover his wound.

"Where are we going?" Robert drove the car out of the alley and scanned around.

Jiang Chen reached out of the window to retract the palm-sized drone as he stuffed it back into his pocket.

"Head into the desert, all the roads are blocked off."

"God... I am still alive, this is unbelievable." Robert steered the wheel as he exaggeratedly let out a long sigh.

"We haven't escaped yet." Jiang Chen said with a bitter smile. He still did underestimate the ability of the terrorists as they responded with such swiftness. The original plan was to follow the road and head back into Baghdad.

"IS is much stronger compared to other extremists. I thought you had plans," Nick had hesitated for a moment before he spoke.

Jiang Chen heard the words as he smiled with bitterness.

[I really don't have a plan, looks like I have been too cocky this time.]

He was not worried about getting caught by the IS since he could always hide in the apocalypse. However, he couldn't bring Robert and Nick over.

"..." Robert sensed the awkwardness on Jiang Chen's face as he laughed. "Don't worry, we'll see as we go. They can't be chasing us forever."

He opened the GPS on the car.

"We still have enough fuel. We'll cross the desert and go from the northern side of the Tharthar Lake to Tikrit. If we are lucky, the government force should be in control of the area." A smile full of resignation appeared on Robert's face, but Jiang Chen couldn't even smile at all.

In other words, if Tikrit is under the control of IS.

They must take the gamble.

If he knew it was so problematic... It's fine since he was already here and had the opportunity to test the strength of this equipment. Jiang Chen shook his head as he closed his eyes to rest. Surprisingly, he realized that he no longer felt uncomfortable killing people.

It was hard to say if it was a good thing or not.

Perhaps it was because all the people he killed deserved it. Jiang Chen remembered the atrocious acts conducted by the IS as he tried to justify his actions.

Robert looked rather optimistic as he hymned along with the tune on the car. The guy probably has seen too many deaths to be bothered by it.

Once the explosive song played, the car lifted the dust up on the sandy ground and drove into the endless desert.

Every single piece of sand here was covered by the smell of chaos.

Xia Shiyu sat on the sofa with her head wrapped in a towel. Under the bathrobe, her smooth and silky legs could be faintly seen covered by droplets of water. It was in the midst of summer as the room was air conditioned. She didn't change into clothes yet as she enjoyed the light breeze.

Although she had a face more attractive than celebrities, even in her free time, it was still expressionless.

She leaned against the sofa as she casually lifted her legs. She turned on the TV with the remote.

"Now we'll continue with the next piece of news. This morning, IS initiated an attack on Tikrit. The president of Iraq stated that they will do anything to defend Tikrit."

Xia Shiyu didn't really care about international news. Like most of the modern professionals, she was more interested in comedy shows, especially the ones that made people laugh.

Surprising, for someone who didn't like to smile enjoyed humor.

[There are no news today?]

Xia Shiyu let out a breath for reasons she couldn't explain.

[No news probably means he is safe.]

At least the news didn't say that a Chinese man was abducted and taken hostage. The ministry of foreign affairs strongly advises citizens... and related news.

[Hmm? Why am I worried about him?]

Xia Shiyu was suddenly shocked as she subconsciously touched her lips as confusion flashed across her eyes.

She shook her head and pushed out the always grinning face from her head as she began to change the channel.

[It must be because I have been too tired lately.]

With the comedians on the screen as well as the waves of laughter from the audience, Xia Shiyu temporarily forgot about what troubled her.

Her breathing returned to normal as her emotion returned to normal.

—

As the night fell, Jiang Chen leaned against the chair with a cigarette in his mouth.

To prevent being spotted, the headlight must remain off. It would be too dangerous to keep going without any light, so Robert

stopped the car.

"If you can't fall asleep, why don't you keep an eye out for now?" Robert smiled bitterly as he pressed against the steering wheel. Nick in the back was already snoring up a storm.

"How far away?" Jiang Chen blew a smoke ring out as he sighed.

"Probably two more days. There is enough water and food, you don't have to be too nervous." Robert shrugged.

Jiang Chen rolled his eyes. [Who is saving who?]

"I am doing a lot to get rid of the ten tons of gold." Jiang Chen curled his lips.

"Ten tons!?" Robert suddenly stood up, but then a banging sound ensued. He hit his head against the roof, but he resisted the pain as he stared at Jiang Chen, full concentrated.

"... Fu\*k, don't look at me like that." Jiang Chen was getting goosebumps as he moved back into contempt.

"Hehe." Robert touched his greasy blond hair and moved back. "I know there is a one hundred million USD deal. But why would I do firearms? I'll just help you sell gold."

"Nope, I only stored this much gold over the years. I am starting

to transition into other industries as well." Jiang Chen let out a sigh.

"Transitioning? Is there something else that's easier to sell?" Robert couldn't fall asleep anymore as he also lit a cigarette.

"Technology."

"Technology? Buffet didn't even dare to touch that." Robert contumaciously sneered, "I tried to open my own firearm company before but gave up soon after. The risk of development is too high, so I only sell the finished product. It is easier to make money this way."

"It is also more dangerous." Jiang Chen didn't disagree.

"Of course, but I love the adventure." Robert awkwardly laughed as he avoided the topic.

The desert night was quiet and peaceful without a soul to be seen. As they got further away from Hadithah, the occasional explosions started to fade as well. But within the quiet night sky, a short burst of homing noise could be heard once in awhile.

"F-22, it's probably the UA doing scouting missions. Maybe we are already on the heat map." Robert lifted his head.

"Oh? Would the UA soldiers jump out and save you?" Jiang Chen smiled.



"No way. We are only a white dot on the heat map. There are plenty of refugees in the desert. The good thing is that there is no weapon on the back of the car or some bullets may have flown down." Robert laughed at the remark.

Jiang Chen gazed at the distant sky. The clouds were thin, and the moon was bright. But even in the moonlight, he couldn't see anything.

"I don't understand. I feel the IS soldiers are not that strong. With the airstrikes of so many nations, why would they not eradicate this problem already?" Jiang Chen did not have the slightest positive feeling about this group.

It has nothing to do with politics nor nationality. From a purely human perspective, any group that killed civilians and raped women are hideous and hated. For whatever reason, it cannot justify the crime against humanity.

He wanted to laugh at the crazy group that said so many laughable claims, but he couldn't.

"It's normal." Robert shrugged, "IS is not simply just a terrorist group. It's a frightening army combined with an ambitious government. A lot of them even received higher education and elite training which taught them how to avoid airstrike and scouting. Also, their opponents have their own personal agendas. Take Turkey, for example, their stance on IS was never clear."

At that moment, Robert also smiled dubiously.

"Also, if the war ended this quickly, how would we feed ourselves? How would the unemployment rate go down?"

Jiang Chen thought about it as he laughed.

He was right.

Who cared, the Middle East was far from Han.

But for some reason, he constantly remembered the world that had fallen apart because of the nuclear war.

The world where even the sun in the middle of a summer day could not cast its ray through the thick radiation cloud. The world where not a single piece of grain grew, and a world where millions of twisted faces instinctively practiced violence.

Jiang Chen suddenly felt a chillness, he tried to wrap himself tighter with his clothes.

The desert night was a bit too chill.

# Chapter 48: Refugees

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"Damn it! Sh\*t!"

The car came to a slow stop as Robert smacked the steering wheel.

Nick quietly walked out of the car as he lifted the front cover.

"The engine is busted."

"Fu\*k! Now we are screwed," Robert said with a voice of defeat.

"..." Jiang Chen thought if he should go back to the apocalypse for a while and bring back a levitating car.

But it was only wishful thinking; he would not do that unless they were hopeless.

If he did it, that would mean he was prepared to abandon the two of them. Then his gold selloff plan would be deserted, and this Iraq trip would become pointless.

"Can you fix it?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Let me try." Nick took the toolbox out from the back of the car as he began to work on the engine.

However, the engine didn't seem to get any better.

Just as they were about to lose hope, Jiang Chen suddenly saw a truck approaching from a distance.

"IS?" He tensed up as he took out the pistol.

Robert also noticed the truck, but his face looked ecstatic.

"Put your gun away, haha, we are saved. Quick! Shout with me! Haha, stop here! Here! Help!" Robert waved his arms as he yelled at the truck to get its attention.

The truck seemed to have noticed the three of them as it slowly drove in their direction.

The truck stopped. Jiang Chen saw that the back of the truck was filled with malnourished refugees. Their clothes were ripped apart and only carried a small amount of luggage. All of them had the same tired and apathetic expression.

Robert walked to the truck driver and spoke with him briefly before he returned full of joy.

"The driver agreed to give us a ride. It is tradition to help each other out in the desert. I promised him that we'll share the freshwater on our car. Since the car is going to be abandoned, let's

take the fuel out as well. Nick, come help me."

"Okay, boss." Nick nodded and ensued.

—

Jiang Chen and Nick sat in the back of the truck while Robert, trying to get close to the driver, sat in the passenger seat.

Since only Robert knew Arabic, the two of them who sat with the refugees could only stare at each other, and couldn't say a word.

All the women were covered in thick headscarves while the men looked exhausted, the children also lacked the energy people of their age possessed. Everyone was tired. They must have suffered a lot.

The atmosphere felt odd.

A Byelorussian and a Han here sure was weird.

"These people are probably Syrian refugees. Since Turkey shut down its borders, some of them chose to go through the Kurdish Region and then be smuggled into Turkey. It's a coincidence that we were able to meet up." At least Jiang Chen knew a little English to be able to chat with Nick.

"Do they know English?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Some probably do, but it doesn't look like they have the energy to chat." Nick shrugged his shoulders.

The back of the truck was crowded and bumpy. A child who he couldn't tell the gender of sat beside Jiang Chen. The dirty face lacked energy and emotion as the messy hair carried a sour odor more pungent than Robert.

Jiang Chen did not care too much about cleanliness as the entire truck was filled with the awful smell, so he didn't pay attention.

Nick already started to snore as his years of military life had programmed him in such a way to preserve his energy. Except the snoring received a few stares in the truck.

He really could sleep anywhere. Jiang Chen forced a smile as he also adjusted the way he sat to take a nap.

The truck drove for a bit longer.

It was around lunch time as some refugees took out the food they carried and began to force it down with some water. The teen sitting beside Jiang Chen took out a black thing that resembled a piece of bread and began chewing.

Perhaps it was because everyone was eating, Jiang Chen also felt hungry. He reached behind him, and when no one was looking, he took out a box of Oreos from the storage dimension. He opened the

package as he started to eat it.

He was prepared for this kind of unexpected situation so he would always store some emergency food and medicine.

Jiang Chen suddenly noticed that a pair of eyes were peeking at him.

Precisely, peeking at him chewing the food.

"Do you want some?" Jiang Chen smiled as he handed the box over.

The pair of eyes quickly fled. However, they seemed to have noticed that Jiang Chen had no ill intentions as that person took over the half box of cookies and only hesitated slightly before devouring them.

This guy was comparable to how Sun Jiao eats. A smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

"Thank you..." The person replied in English. The person then seemed to have realized that the box was empty before a guilty expression surfaced and they lowered their head. "Sorry..."

"Don't worry, I still have lots," Jiang Chen said with a friendly smile, "Can I know your name?"

"Ayesha, seventeen years old."

She was a girl. He was wondering why the voice was so light. Maybe because she was not an adult yet, and she didn't wear the headscarf like all the other women in the truck.

"My name is Jiang Chen, I come from Han. Where are your parents?"

"They got killed by the IS... all because my mom rejected those devils' demand." Ayesha's voice was calm and emotionless, without much sorrow on her face. It made Jiang Chen speechless, as he didn't expect such a depressing topic.

"Sorry," Jiang Chen gently said, but he received a peculiar look.

"What happened?" Jiang Chen asked confusedly. He was not sure if he said something he shouldn't have since he only knew the peaceful way of life.

"Nothing. I just didn't expect someone to say sorry to me." Ayesha turned her head.

"Do you have any plans once you get to Turkey?" Jiang Chen forced a smile as he decided to talk about something lighter.

Perhaps once she started her new life, she would be slightly happier.



"No plan, head to refugee camp and receive humanitarian aid... and see if there is a Saudi or Turkish man that's willing to buy me. I am still a virgin, if I dress up, it shouldn't be a problem." The girl's voice was calm, with an awareness and apathy unfitting for her age.

[Okay... looks like any topic will become depressing.]

Jiang Chen chose to shut up.

—

The truck would still stop overnight due to possible dangers. The driver also needed to rest.

At this time the refugees would choose to go the washroom and stand outside for a bit of the light breeze. Jiang Chen got out of the truck and went to the washroom. He also lavishly took out some paper to whip.

Once the car stopped, Robert came and chatted with the two of them for a while. He still went back to the passenger seat when he slept. Robert said that he slipped the driver a Franklin bill and the driver immediately became more welcoming.

At night, Jiang Chen felt hungry again.

He had too many Oreos, so Jiang Chen took out another kind of strawberry cookies and began to chew on them.

He heard a faint gulping sound beside him and thought about it briefly before he smiled and gave half of the cookies to the girl.

"Try it, it's from my hometown."

The girl didn't respond. Instead, she started to devour the food. Jiang Chen looked at her and didn't say anything.

Since he was full, it was time to sleep. Jiang Chen leaned against the truck as he drifted into sleep. Although snores could be heard all over the truck, tiredness was the best sleeping pill.

As to Nick, this guy always fell asleep instantaneously, he also wakes up at random intervals. The thunderous snoring already started to ring.

Except what Jiang Chen didn't notice was a pair of eyes that examined him.

Ayesha licked the cookie crumbs off of her fingers as she looked at the side of Jiang Chen's face. Her eyes were filled with confusion.

The next morning, Jiang Chen woke up on the bumpy ride.

"We are almost there." Nick noticed Jiang Chen waking up and looked at the phone screen. "GPS shows that we are only 40 kilometers away from Tikrit."

The roaring engine noise filled his ear as the vibration of the engine almost made Jiang Chen lose the feeling in his back. He wiped his face with his hand as dust filled his palm. He was slightly shocked before he quickly realized.

This is definitely not a place to stay.

"That's good, I can't wait to take a hot shower... and then sleep." Jiang Chen stretched as he forced a smile.

The battery in his phone was almost drained. To prepare for the unexpected, he decided to shut it down.

"I have a bad feeling." Nick frowned as he touched his black backpack. His M27 was in it.

"I hope you are wrong."

"Hopefully." Nick closed his phone as his phone was about to die as well.

Ayesha raised her head to look at the two foreigners before

putting her chin between her arms and closing her eyes.

[Looks like we won't get to Turkey.]

Being born among the chaos, she was too familiar with this smell.

The smell of death.

# Chapter 49: The Flames of War

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"I have a company in the UA, a massive one. I like what you do. If you want, you can come drive for me. Don't worry about the green card either; the Senate is really close to me." Robert was passionately bullsh\*tting in the passenger seat, happily chatting with the driver who was wearing a red headscarf and holding a cigarette in his mouth.

Bang!

Spider web cracks had swept across the window pane before it shattered, scattering in like snowflakes.

"Sh\*t!"

Robert quickly rolled underneath the seat and grabbed the steering wheel, resisting the pain from the cuts on his head as he pulled the truck to a stop.

The driver who previously had a bright smile on his face now had a gaping, bloody hole in his head.

—

The truck shook violently, the intense vibrations jostling the unprepared refugees to the ground. At the same time Jiang Chen grabbed the metal handle behind him, he grabbed onto Ayesha who was about to fall out and dragged her back into the truck.

The truck swung left and right on the desert sands before it came to a gradual stop without tipping over.

The back of the truck was chaos.

Women trembled and sobbed with their hands over their heads while the men who managed to regain their balance held onto their luggage with uncertainty, they had an overwhelming expression of fear on their faces.

Without question, it was IS.

This was the death sentence.

"What happened, d\*mmit... Are you okay?" Jiang Chen caught his breath as he dragged Ayesha up.

Looking at Jiang Chen, Ayesha emotionlessly shook her head. Blood dripped out from the corner of her mouth, most likely from biting herself during the fall. Fortunately, she hadn't been thrown out from the truck.

"IS' slave catchers. They're active in the desert and occasionally visit villages. Women will be forced to become sex slaves and men will either be killed or forced to join their group. Could you give me a bullet? If I save my virginity, I can go to heaven."

"No." Jiang Chen smiled.

That smile made Ayesha blank out for a moment.

"Then I'll pray for you." The girl looked down, hiding her eyes behind her greasy, black hair strands.

"Prepare to engage." Nick leaned against the truck with his M27 already loaded and locked.

"I wonder how Robert is doing," Jiang Chen murmured under his breath as he took out the 11 Tactical Pistol. Following Nick's signal, he quickly leaned against the other side of the door.

The refugees in the truck stared at them with stark desperation. They moved out of the way and covered their heads as they prayed for safety and victory for the two strangers.

The sound of a machine gun firing rang out from a distance, but none of the bullets hit the truck.

A Toyota pickup truck equipped with a heavy machine gun slammed to stop beside the truck before several masked soldiers jumped out.

"I surrender!" Robert crawled out of the passenger seat with his hands on his head. He knew that with his ability, the best he could do was not hold the others back.

The IS soldier was ecstatic when he saw it was a white man. He turned around and spoke with his commander before he struck Robert in the face with his gun barrel, knocking him to the ground.

"Search the back, quick!" The commander stood before Robert with his AK, his face twisted into a grimace that flashed his white teeth.

With a face that seemed close to crying, Robert looked up and forced a smile, only to receive a boot in the face.

"Drag him to the car for ransom!" the commander ordered as the soldiers dragged him towards the Toyota pickup.

When he heard these words, Robert let out a sigh of relief. These people were likely from Hadithah. If these devils knew that he was an escapee, perhaps his limbs would have already been chopped off and the video uploaded online.

As long as he did not die, there were always opportunities.

Two soldiers with AK's leisurely walked towards the back with smiles on their faces. They chatted as they lifted the blinds up.

It was a sweet job. Although the slaves they captured didn't belong to them, they had the liberty to pick out one or two to "enjoy" first, and no one would punish them.



They fired two bullets into the air and grinned with satisfaction as they heard the screeching from inside the truck. The two men glanced at each other before the man on the right climbed into the truck first.

There was no better way to unleash his interest in brutality than taking in the frightened looks.

A grim smile appeared on the terrorist's face.

Suddenly from the shadows, a giant hand reached out with polar bear-like strength and snapped the fragile neck. Jiang Chen straightforwardly swung his arm like a hammer and smashed the other terrorist's head into the ground with his superhuman power.

"I'll go to the front to save Robert. You try to catch their attention from here, and be careful of the machinegun." Finished explaining, Nick quickly jumped out of the car.

Jiang Chen shook his slightly numb right hand. He was planning on using the pistol to smash the terrorist's skull, but he accidentally hammered with his arm instead.

The result was the same regardless.

[Looks like I need to study some combat technique. Relying on pure strength is cutting it too close.]

Jiang Chen sighed as he grabbed the AK off the floor and lightly jumped out.

He turned the corner and opened fire at the pickup truck, catching the terrorists by surprise. Robert had yet to be dragged onto the pickup truck when the gunshots made the terrorist drop him and began firing back.

Without hesitation, a terrorist spun the machine gun to face Jiang Chen before unleashing a storm of bullets at Jiang Chen. In response, an explosive amount of nitrogen burst out from Jiang Chen's right arm, blocking all of the bullets mid-air.

"What is that thing?!" The commander ducked behind the truck and craned his head around the corner to look at Jiang Chen with a look of horror.

"I don't know! The bullets can't penetrate it!" The machine gunner fired ferociously, but his desire to rip Jiang Chen apart with the bullets was futile.

Clank!

The bullets ran out.

The soldiers grabbed their AK's to shoot at Jiang Chen, hoping to gain time for the machine gunner to reload. Despite their efforts, however, bullets from the other side began to accurately take all of them down.

It was Nick, who had begun his attack with the M27.

Since Jiang Chen's nitrogen armor was reaching its limit, he started shooting under the cover of Nick's surprise attack. Whether he hit anyone was another question entirely, but at least the recoil was nothing for his muscle strength.

"D\*mn it! Use the white man as a hostage. Get up!" the commander yelled at a soldier. He could not leave cover with so many bullets suppressing his movements.

The soldier by the hill was also nervous. He couldn't hit Nick who was hiding behind the truck's engine, and his two companions were killed instead. But as he turned and reached for Robert, a gun was already pressed against his head.

"Fu\*k you." Robert pulled the trigger without hesitation. The gun was from a soldier who died from Nick's bullets.

The commander saw Robert move and aimed his AK towards him. A sudden impact against his side, however, blew him ten meters away, breaking almost every single one of his ribs.

Jiang Chen retracted the overheated nitrogen armor and then looked at the half-dead machine gunner before he finished the deed with one more bullet.

"Boss, are you okay?" Nick walked up and helped Robert up.

"Sh\*t, this fu\*king hurts." Robert covered his bruised face as he stood up cursing. He then turned to Jiang Chen and asked, "Is that guy dead?"

"His ribs are broken, so as good as dead." Jiang Chen shrugged.

"Good job." Robert raised his pistol and shot two more bullets. The commander on the ground didn't even have the strength to scream.

"What do we do now?" Nick checked the pickup truck in the front. "The fuel is good for 200 kilometers, and we can head to Baghdad by ourselves."

"Let's do that." Robert limped past the truck and grabbed the backup fuel tank and water tank that previously belonged to their old car.

"What about those refugees?" Jiang Chen looked at the truck and asked.

Robert and Nick stared at Jiang Chen with a look of disbelief.

"What?" Jiang Chen said with a bitter smile.

"Buddy," Robert threw the supplies onto the pickup truck and patted Jiang Chen on the shoulder, "since the IS patrol team is

already here, that means Tikrit is probably conquered. The United Nations can take care of the humanitarian stuff. We don't belong here, and we don't need to worry about them. With enough fuel, we can directly head to Baghdad. It's enough to remind them of the danger ahead. If we go with them, we'll be too big of a target."

"I agree with the boss." Nick took out a black marker and climbed onto the engine cover as he proceeded to draw some odd symbols on the roof.

"Fine." Jiang Chen shrugged. Although he pitied the refugees, he knew that too much of it would only cost him his own life. "I'll go tell them. What are you drawing?"

"UA symbol—to prevent the drones from blowing us up." Nick wiped the sweat off of his forehead.

"Black can absorb heat, so the thermal detection device can detect the UA symbol on top of the roof. This way, we won't get blown apart."

The car belonged to IS after all.

—

Jiang Chen flipped open the blinds covering the back of the truck as many pairs of frightened eyes locked onto him.

"Tikrit is dangerous. IS may have occupied the place. Baghdad is

safe. That's all." Jiang Chen took a deep breath and gave them the news, feeling uncomfortable in this atmosphere.

At least some of them had to know English as the refugees began to chat among themselves. They appeared to be even more frightened by the news.

He did his deed here, whether they liked it or not.

He sighed and was about to turn around and leave when a hand gently grabbed him.

"Hmm?"

Jiang Chen turned around and saw the dirty face of the girl from earlier.

Under the dry and greasy black hair strands were eyes filled with pleading and uncertainty. She said something in Arabic, but Jiang Chen couldn't understand, so he shook his head in confusion. Perhaps the words were too complicated for the girl to express in English.

[Maybe she is hungry?]

After thinking for a moment, Jiang Chen took out a box of cookies and handed them to her.

The girl shook her head and after hesitating, she opened her mouth and said with a raw voice, "Please take me with you."

Jiang Chen was shocked. He first smiled, ready to reject, but then he gazed into her eyes and saw the pleading look in them.

[No plan, head to refugee camp and receive humanitarian aid... and see if there is a Saudi or Turkish man that's willing to buy me...]

For some strange reason, Jiang Chen remembered the words the girl spoke yesterday.

They had pierced his heart like nails.

He opened his mouth as he looked at the girl's dirty face and couldn't say a word.

He sighed.

This sympathy again.

"Follow me." Jiang Chen exhaled as he jumped out of the car.

The girl's rigid face finally displayed a flicker of joy. She prayed genuinely and immediately followed after him.

"You're finally back. Let's get on our way." Robert noticed the girl behind Jiang Chen, and the way he looked at Jiang Chen suddenly became dubious as he lightly whistled.

Nick, who was usually expressionless, also glanced at Jiang Chen with a suspicious look.

"It's not what you guys think." Jiang Chen tried to defend himself.

"How are you going to take care of her? Why don't you come to the UA and work with me? Utah supports polygamy." Robert patted Jiang Chen's shoulder, who was sitting in the passenger seat.

"And get on the FBA wanted list with you?" Jiang Chen rolled his eyes.

"Ahem, won't ever happen again. Since I escaped, a lot of things will be different." Robert started the car, but not before Jiang Chen caught a glimpse of cunning that did not fit the young age of his face.

Jiang Chen leaned against the chair and didn't respond.

"I mean, my brother, anyone has moments of highs and lows, especially for people like us who engage in dangerous businesses. If your business is not doing so well, come find me," Robert said



calmly, but Jiang Chen heard the sincerity in his voice.

"I am a good businessman now." Jiang Chen laughed, but he remembered Robert's words deep down.

"No way, you are bullsh\*ting me." Robert smiled as he gripped the steering wheel.

Nick and Ayesha sat mutely in the back. Nick had his shades on and was probably resting while Ayesha gazed at the back of Jiang Chen's head with her mouth slightly open, but no words came out.

"Robert speaks Arabic," Nick suddenly said. A smile appeared on his mustached face.

Ayesha hesitated for a moment as she shot a grateful look at Nick. After pondering, she rallied her courage and said the same words again.

Robert, who was chatting with Jiang Chen, suddenly stopped and gave Jiang Chen a dubious look again.

"What did she say?" Jiang Chen noticed Robert's expression and asked.

"I pray to Allah that you are able to punish the devils that pretend to use his mercy. Then, even if you believe in heresy, I can still be the present from the desert and become your wife. I'll be gentle like a camel and attend to you and your wife. As long as you give

me a place... This is so corny. I had to translate into English and then into Han , so it might be a bit off, but that's the meaning of it."

Robert made fun of Jiang Chen, looking like he was about to burst from holding back his laughter.

"What the fu\*k." This was the only thing Jiang Chen could force out.

"Utah supports polygamy. Do you need a green card?" Robert laughed raucously.

"You can save that for yourself."

He didn't have plans to expand internationally.

"True, but it's only paperwork after all. I know someone from Hong Kong who has ten wives, just not officially," Robert replied.

"I don't even have a wife yet."

Robert looked at Jiang Chen full of surprise. "That's impossible. You don't have a woman with this much money? Hehe, how about when I get back to Los Angeles, I'll invite you to try some of the girls on the movie screens."

"Next time, after I take care of the gold, I still have other things

to figure out." Jiang Chen stared out the window as he lit up a cigarette.

"Hehe, now that I think about it, all of the Middle-Eastern beauties come from Lebanon and Syria. The girl obsessed with you in the back is a little young, but once she grows up, she'll probably be a beauty. I probably won't come back to this god-forbidden place in a while, but before I leave, I'll go to the Turkish border and bring a Syrian beauty back." Robert narrowed his eyes into the endless desert.

Jiang Chen rolled his eyes at the pervert and ignored him.

As for how he was going to take care of Ayesha, he still had no idea.

He sighed and rubbed his temple.

[The first thing is to take her back home. As for the visa, it should be simplified with money.]

Since he had the funds, it was always good to do some good deeds.

Did he have other thoughts?

With the dry and greasy hair hanging around her dirty face, he really didn't have any for now at least.

# Chapter 50: FBA Agent

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Besides a small-scale sandstorm, the remaining journey was smooth without any unexpected events.

The three of them took turns driving. Even Jiang Chen, who did not own a car, had a driver's license.

After Robert discussed with Nick and Jiang Chen about detouring around Tikrit since it was likely IS territory, they decided to follow Tharthar Lake and head northeast through Samarra before arriving in Baghdad. This was their plan to avoid all possible high-activity areas.

At night, the four of them stayed in the car. The sound of fighter jets screeching above them made the whole evening a tense affair. Despite that, no bombs dropped down thanks to the black pen that clearly served its purpose.

Nick found a random reason to change seats with Jiang Chen, leaving Robert to lean towards Jiang Chen's ear with an unclear expression and say with a lowered voice, "Don't worry, I'm pretty dead when I sleep. If you want to... hehe, I won't look." Robert also glanced with a smirk at Ayesha who was huddled into a ball in the corner.

"Fu\*k off!"

Jiang Chen didn't have the desire to at this point, and even if he did, the smell was too awful.

For these refugees who ran for their lives, they didn't have the time to clean themselves as every moment was focused on survival.

As for Ayesha, whose beautiful features were hidden by the dirt, she was aware of her terrible body odor and kept to her corner in a vain attempt to avoid bothering Jiang Chen.

To be fair, although she smelled, it was not at a level where Jiang Chen couldn't bear it. If he could fall asleep in the pungent truck from before, then he wouldn't mind the smell now—especially since Robert who hadn't showered in over a week probably smelled worse.

"I... I might have some odor, but I can promise that once I shower, I'll use my body to make you satisfied." Ayesha bit her lips as she spoke. It took almost all of her courage to say these words aloud.

Two whistles came from the front of the car as Robert and Nick obviously hadn't fallen asleep yet.

[These two animals.] Jiang Chen cursed in his mind.

"Ahem, I, I really don't mind," he said a bit awkwardly.

Ayesha blushed, but it was not visible from under the dirt.

"Is it okay for Islamic women to marry a Han? I heard that the Han believe in Confucius," Robert said mockingly.

She silently gazed at Jiang Chen.

"Following your logic, we also thought your people were all Christians, but you say sh\*t more than you say God. Also, did your Han teacher never tell you that Confucianism is not a religion?" Jiang Chen shot back.

Of course, this was debatable.

Robert shrugged and laughed. "Don't look at me like that. I do pray when necessary."

Jiang Chen looked at Ayesha, and after some hesitation, asked with a serious voice, "As you've already heard, I don't believe in anything and don't plan on it either. I heard that Islamic women are not allowed to marry people of other religions. Is this still okay?"

"No problem." Ayesha shook her head. "You helped Allah to eradicate the demons in his name. You are my savior. Without you, I probably would have died in humiliation. Since you saved me, I am yours."

Jiang Chen's throat gulped slightly as he silently gazed into the peacefulness in her eyes.

To be honest, he was tempted.

No man could resist a beautiful girl like this, especially him, who had been a virgin for over 20 years and lost his virginity in another world.

Of course, righteous men would be different, but Jiang Chen was honest enough to admit his personal flaws. Without the proper environment to shape him, he grew up acting like anyone else.

If she wanted it, then it was up to her.

Perhaps after a shower, her beautiful foreigner looks would come through. Maybe she would be a good driver.

With these thoughts, he felt relieved and didn't pursue his musings.

As for the two animals up front, the thunderous snores had already begun.

—

The next morning, they grabbed a couple of crackers to eat between sips of water as breakfast.

According to the GPS, they were very close to Baghdad. Twenty kilometers northwest of the city limit, they got stopped by the

patrolling UA forces, but after a brief inspection, the soldiers didn't give them any trouble.

Robert displayed his green card to the patrolling officer and managed to borrow their car's satellite phone. After making a few calls, he returned the phone.

Although the UA soldiers were not known for their good behavior, when they encountered their own citizens, they were quite friendly. After all, no one wanted to receive a subpoena from the court. The soldier from Ohio struck up a conversation with Jiang Chen thinking he was a reporter.

Nick, who already naturally looked like a bodyguard, began to smoke beside the Hummer.

Ayesha hid in the car despite the interior's humidity. It was easy to tell how terribly the American soldiers had acted in the past from the distrust in her eyes.

Several minutes later, a black shadow appeared in the distant horizon.

It was a Little Bird helicopter in which Jiang Chen also recognized a familiar face.

The violent gusts of air from the helicopter swirled the sands away from itself and into the surrounding people. Once the helicopter safely landed, the man in the passenger seat unbuckled



his seatbelt and jumped down.

"Bruce, my old buddy, we meet again," Robert greeted as he approached and gave the mercenary in combat uniform a hug.

"Sh\*t, why do you smell so bad? Looks like you haven't been doing well lately." Bruce patted Robert on the back and then immediately pushed him away.

"Ahem, I have been doing terrible lately, but that's all in the past." Robert dusted the sand off his body and flashed his white teeth in a grin.

"I don't think this can be solved so easily. Mr. Robert, nice to meet you again."

Another middle-aged man with a sharply pointed nose disembarked from the helicopter. He gave a keen look towards Jiang Chen who felt quite uncomfortable, but he only frowned slightly and didn't say much.

"Ahem, Mr. Laurence, nice to meet you." Robert smiled awkwardly and extended his hand.

"Looks like you managed to escape danger," Laurence said casually as he shrugged.

Bruce stood beside Jiang Chen and greeted him.

"I can't believe you came here to help him." Bruce forced a bitter smile and took the cigarette Jiang Chen passed over.

"Who is this person? Robert seems to be afraid of him." Jiang Chen leisurely blew a smoke ring.

"Laurence Oden, FBA agent."

"Please don't release my information to irrelevant foreigners, Mr. Bruce, or I'll have to deliver my doubts on your work quality to Black Water International on behalf of the FBA." Laurence heard their conversation and put Robert aside as he walked towards Jiang Chen's direction.

With his back towards Laurence, Bruce rolled his eyes at Jiang Chen and rolled his shoulders. "A guy that's not that easy to get along with."

Jiang Chen locked gazes with Laurence who stood in front of him. The uncomfortable stare continued for a while before Laurence opened his mouth.

"Are you here on behalf of your country? Or as an individual?"

"Robert is only a business partner," Jiang Chen said calmly.

"Then I hope your business is successful and that you avoid

getting involved with this matter." Laurence didn't try to lower his voice from Robert in the slightest, glancing at him directly as he talked to Jiang Chen.

"Ahem, don't be like this, buddy." Robert rolled his eyes. "Maybe we can talk?"

"I don't have any interest in your conflict. Maybe you can discuss it in private?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"Discuss?" Laurence opened his palms and smiled humorlessly at Robert. "How do you want to discuss these four hundred tons of oil from Iran. Are you out of your mind?"

"There is no evidence now." Robert smirked, not fazed in the slightest. He reached out and thumped his hand on Laurence's shoulder. "Buddy, maybe we can make a deal."

"Hmm? I'm listening." Laurence scoffed at him but didn't push Robert's hand away.

"To prevent these sort of unexpected events from occurring, I usually have an extra layer of protection when I conduct business in highly sensitive area. For example, a box of empty bullets that are installed with a GPS signal. Where these firearms go, you can imagine." A cunning look flickered in Robert's eyes.

Laurence's facial expression drastically changed.

"Where is it?"

"Right here." Robert grinned and threw a smartphone into Laurence's hands. "Congratulations, future head agent Mr. Laurence. This is going to be a big deal."

"Your smart ass saved you this time. I'll let this one incident go." Laurence peered at Robert for a long time before he turned and put the phone into his suitcase. He then dashed for the Little Bird helicopter. "Bruce, let's go. We have to go back to the aircraft carrier."

"Okay, boss." Bruce answered and shrugged helplessly at Jiang Chen before he followed.

"And also that Biden! I need to have a chat with him!" Robert yelled at the helicopter that was lifting off.

"Do whatever!"

The witness protection program was only a verbal promise; whether it was kept depended on Laurence.

"You guys made a deal?" Jiang Chen asked Robert.

"Yeah, a missile guided by the GPS could send all those b\*stards into heaven. I bet they're all busy carrying the firearms into their warehouses. Sh\*t, this is big." Robert smiled gleefully and held onto Jiang Chen's shoulder. "Let's forget about these politicians

with their hands full of sh\*t. I'll treat you to some fine booze in Baghdad."

"You're not nervous at all." Jiang Chen was speechless.

"I've been in this industry for too long. Maybe I'll think about transitioning to a different industry." Robert shook his head. "The Iran oil business is done for. I'll have to go to Saudi Arabia and close down the shell company."

The three of them returned to the pickup truck and said their goodbyes to the patrolling American soldiers. Robert settled into the driver seat and started the car towards Baghdad.

"Do you have any idea what you want to do now?" Jiang Chen casually asked.

"Somewhat. That's right! Movies! Haha, Hollywood movie producer doesn't sound so bad. Next time you come to Los Angeles, I'll arrange some Hollywood girls for you." Robert smiled.

"Hollywood celebrities... can you afford them?" Jiang Chen glanced at Robert as he chuckled.

Robert smiled with his hands on the steering wheel. "Los Angeles is a place filled with dreams. As long as you're a movie producer, those blond girls who dream of becoming famous overnight will prepare their asses for you. That godd\*mn place, it's magnificent..."

"Looks like it's the same for any country's entertainment industry." Jiang Chen chuckled as he suddenly remembered Liu Yao.

A grin surfaced.

Maybe he should also become a movie producer. It was only a way to spend money after all.

# Chapter 51: Ayesha's Determination

---

The battle was spreading to Baghdad, Iraq's capital. The sound of explosions made for a sleepless night as it cast a gloom of war on the once prosperous city.

Of course, that was only for the natural citizens of Baghdad.

As for the foreigners like Jiang Chen and Robert, they drank and caroused, untouched by the events around them.

Amidst the bar's flashing lights, heavy metal rap pierced through everyone's ear drums. A Lebanon beauty writhed on stage with her snake-like waist and dark blond hair swinging. The men sitting by the dance floor howled and screamed as one as they threw Franklins in exchange for more exotic moves.

Behind the bar, a black bartender placed mixed cocktails in front of Robert and Jiang Chen. The establishment was rumored to belong to a British man as most of the customers were either foreign soldiers or laborers and reporters.

The people here didn't have to bear the burdens of this war, even if the battlefield was at the doorstep. They knew their country's army would come and cover their departure.

It truly made people envious, to have your home country always be your staunchest ally and protection no matter where you were.

"Safe trip." Robert raised his cup.

"Safe trip." Jiang Chen toasted him and threw it back.

The cocktail tasted rather odd. Other than the alcohol, there seemed to be something else mixed with it.

"I heard they banned alcohol." Jiang Chen swirled the crystal glass as he enjoyed the beauties dancing on the floor.

"That's for religious people. The owner here has an influential background which grants him a special license to sell. Also, the majority of the people here are active American soldiers or Black Water International mercenaries. Even if the occasional drunk were to cause problems, they'd be kicked out immediately. This place doesn't even need bouncers." Robert smiled with narrowed eyes as he took a sip. "For these guys that live on a knife's edge, only this sort of stimulation can give them the peace of mind again to feel alive."

Speaking of the people who could die any second, Robert referred to not only the soldiers who were in danger of stepping on landmines, but also to himself as a firearms merchant.

Jiang Chen's hand holding the glass briefly trembled as he thought deeply about the chaotic apocalypse and the people who suffered there.

He did not feel any pity.



It was only that he realized he was one of those who could lose his life at any moment.

[I'll be more careful in the future.]

He shook his head as he took another gulp.

"Handsome, do you want a shot?" Two Middle Eastern beauties in tank tops stopped in front of Jiang Chen and Robert and winked seductively.

"Which one do you want?" Robert whistled at the two beauties as he glanced slyly at Jiang Chen. "This is on me."

"Neither, I have a headache. I'll go sleep since I have to catch a flight tomorrow." Jiang Chen didn't feel tempted in the slightest as he sighed and tossed the cup onto the counter.

"Don't act like a middle-aged man, buddy. Haha, then I'll take both." Robert laughed, gathering both of the beauties into his arms and caressing them in his drunkenness.

Jiang Chen rubbed his slightly sore temple and stood up to leave.

He left the bar with its heavy metal screams and desire-filled cheers as he drowsily searched for the hotel door in his alcohol-driven stupor.

He shoved the door open and dived into the soft bed, snoring almost immediately with a pungent, alcohol smell wafting from him.

Ayesha, who was curled up on the side, smelled the liquor and slightly raised her eyebrows before she let out a sigh.

He was a non-believer after all.

Once they reached the hotel, Jiang Chen brought her here. Not only did she take a shower, but he also brought her a hot lunch to enjoy. He also requested the hotel attendant to purchase new clothes for her from a store nearby. Although it was not in their job descriptions, a hefty tip took care of the problem.

After settling her in, Jiang Chen left the hotel.

And then he didn't come back until almost midnight.

Ayesha didn't sleep until he came home, acting out her role as wife as she courteously waited for her man to come home. This was what her mother had taught her, but unfortunately, she would never be able to see her daughter get married.

Marriage was an uncertainty as Ayesha heard that many countries believed in monogamy. For her who was "picked up", she didn't envy the ritual—only, she was happy that Jiang Chen did not leave her behind.

Different from before, she was clean and dressed in new clothes.

The exotic beauty was just under the surface, ready to bloom at any moment. Yet even now, it was hidden under an emotionless expression. The rigid and thin body was noticeably malnourished, but the existing curves were accentuated by the slightly thin fabric of the clothes. After a bit of care, Ayesha would become a beauty like her mother.

There were many beauties from her country.

But in this forsaken piece of desert, beauty was a sin.

Ayesha's eyes were different from Xia Shiyu's pride-filled gaze. They were instead apathetic, perhaps towards life itself? Jiang Chen couldn't know for sure with just an intuition.

The day she saw her parents brutally murdered, her tears, her fears, and her sorrows were drained from her body along with her hatred. She had seen far too many tragedies that she even questioned her feelings for her own life.

If faced with the decision between death and a greater pain, she was prepared to calmly choose to end her own life. It was a logic taught to her by war, virulent and widespread among the people.

Despite all that happened, however, this sympathetic Eastern man accepted her.

Ayesha ignored the awful smell of alcohol as she shifted Jiang Chen's body. She then took a hot towel and placed it on his forehead.

[This place is like heaven.]

Pristine bedsheets, beautiful decorations—she was never so happy before, and she treasured this contentment dearly.

Once she wiped Jiang Chen's face, a hint of softness showed in her apathetic eyes. Her finger lightly touched Jiang Chen's chest as she hesitated before she took a deep breath and made up her mind to unzip Jiang Chen's clothes.

She placed the sweat-drenched clothes to the side and blushed at the muscular body. Embarrassed, she still reached out with her trembling hands as she gently towed Jiang Chen's body.

"Mhmm..." Jiang Chen snorted and turned around, scaring Ayesha.

Only when she saw that Jiang Chen was still asleep did her rapidly pumping heart calm down.

She knew she didn't do anything wrong, but she was still afraid to have him wake up. Gathering her nerves once more, she gently bit her lips.

When his breath became regular again, Ayesha finally pulled up the courage once more to wipe the sweat from his back.

Although she made up her mind to continue, she was still not completely prepared which explained her unabated apprehension.

"Sun Jiao, Yao Yao," Jiang Chen murmured in his sleep as he turned around and grabbed Ayesha's hand.

Ayesha jumped and then froze in place.

[Sun Jiao... Yao Yao? Are these the names of the mistresses?]

Not knowing Han, her sixth sense as a woman proved to be a scary and sensitive weapon.

When she heard the names, Ayesha felt relieved, but at the same time, an ambiguous emotion crept in.

Jealousy? Not quite... Maybe it was just unease.

She gazed at Jiang Chen's face with her head close to him. Just as she realized her embarrassing act, Jiang Chen shifted until he was on top of her.

[What to do? Will I get eaten right away?]

Her face suddenly blushed a dark red. The once-apathetic eyes became flustered and confused. She was unable to register that she was leaning into him as her brain melted into a mess.

[But... this is not too bad since it was inevitable.]

Ayesha tried to convince herself as she bit her lip and obediently wrapped her arms around his neck.

[Rather than ending up a devil's sex slave without any dignity or human rights, this ending is much better.]

[At least this way, my purity will only be for one person, and I will serve only one man.]

Ayesha persuaded herself into calming her racing heart. She urged away her embarrassment and brought her lips closer to Jiang Chen's alcohol-filled breath.

This was making him commit a crime.

Or adding oil to the fire.

—

Half drowsy, Jiang Chen felt like he was in heaven. A beautiful servant placed fresh grapes by his mouth, prompting him to eat it without any hesitation. Not only were there delicious grapes, there

were also sweet wine, fresh juice, and passionate joy.

Wait, why was there passionate joy?

Maybe it was because of the sweat.

Who cared, it was euphoric after all.

## Chapter 52: Back Home

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The next morning, Jiang Chen held his head as he woke up with a minor headache.

[Did I get drunk last night?]

About to sit up, he rubbed his eyes and suddenly froze.

The girl beside him slept quietly, her hair scattered across her face and her breathing gentle but tired.

And on the bedsheet was a distinct red spot.

[Fu\*k? What did I do?]

He almost lost strength and fell off the bed.

"You're awake?" Ayesha was roused from her dream from his sudden movements.

She followed the direction of Jiang Chen's shocked look and gently bit her lips, burying her head into the sheets.

Although she had been mentally prepared, when the moment came, Ayesha still felt scared.



The pain that ripped her apart almost made her cry, although the sensation that soon followed helped her enter a pleasurable state, nearly enough to make her forget the soreness. Although it hurt, she surprisingly didn't mind losing her first time like this.

"Mhmm." Jiang Chen scratched his head as he forced a smile. "Ummm, sorry."

"No need to be sorry. I am your wife. It's okay even if I don't get a real name to myself. I understand the tradition of your hometown," Ayesha whispered with her head still lowered and her shoulders covered by the blankets.

Where Ayesha came from, her age was acceptable for marriage but to Jiang Chen...

How could he explain that rather than tradition, it was better described as problematic.

He shook himself out of his momentary frozen state before he sighed and said apologetically, "Last night, I drank too much. Hmm, it must hurt a lot, right?"

His memory from last night was already fading, making him assume that he had forced her when the reality was different.

"Mhmm, it's too big." The words didn't have time to process before she immediately blushed at the inappropriate nature.

"Ahem!" Jiang Chen almost choked on his own spit. Ayesha immediately moved over to pat his back, except she lost hold of her wrapped sheet that soon slipped down.

The nicely shaped breasts and waist were fully exposed to him.

"Ahhh!" Ayesha shrieked and reached out with her trembling hands to cover herself again.

They already crossed the line, but she still felt embarrassed. Jiang Chen scratched his head, but in the end, only sighed.

"Study some Han."

"Mhmm." Ayesha buried her head once more, afraid to look him in the eyes.

Jiang Chen forced a smile when he saw the redness on the sheet again and awkwardly patted his still-drowsy head.

He never considered himself a noble guy, but he had his own boundaries. Taking a young girl's first time still made him feel quite guilty. Even if alcohol was involved, it was not an excuse to escape responsibility.

But Ayesha's voluntary demure perspective made Jiang Chen feel a bit better.

He was touched by her understanding and made up his mind to treat this girl nicely.

At the very least, he would let her live a life one hundred times more comfortable than the one she had here.

He awkwardly rejected Ayesha's proposal to dress him as it would corrupt him to the bone and threw his clothes on before he hastily escaped from the room.

Watching Jiang Chen leave, a smile appeared on Ayesha's face.

In it was contained a slight affection.

She gathered her hands in front of her chest with a lowered head and prayed sincerely to her god.

[Meeting you was the best thing to happen in my life.]

—

At noon, Jiang Chen brought Ayesha along with him on the flight to Dubai. Because Baghdad had no direct flight to Han, their best option was to have a layover at Dubai first before heading to Han.

Before that, there was an incident with Ayesha's identity.

Because of the constant chaos in Syria, Ayesha couldn't bring any forms of identification with her when she escaped the country. Impractical to contact her home country, she was currently without an identity, so Jiang Chen thought to use money to get her an ID of some sort.

But when he arrived at the counsel, it was empty. Only when he asked the Iraqi soldier patrolling outside did he finally learn that all of the consulate workers had left on the last flight to Han to avoid the conflict. The soldier was experienced in handling such situations as he directed Jiang Chen to the UN office, but Jiang Chen impatiently called Robert who had planned on staying for a few more days.

Hearing about Jiang Chen's trouble, Robert happily offered his help and contacted someone in the American Embassy to acquire a green card and passport for Ayesha at the cost of 20,000 USD.

Robert, however, rejected Jiang Chen's offer to pay.

"Compared to the deal we're about to make, this is nothing, right?" Robert laughed on the other end of the phone.

Jiang Chen couldn't disagree with that either.

With an ID, Ayesha could finally book tickets, and her visa to enter Han would be resolved in the Dubai embassy.

For a whole day, Jiang Chen stayed with Ayesha in Dubai.

Although he was envious of the renowned city of wealth, it was not the right time for a tour. He had many loose ends to tie up, such as converting the millions of gold he had in his possession, buying a mansion, and finding a new car to own since he could travel at any time.

Finally, after a nine-hour flight, the two landed in Beijing.

It was already eight at night when they touched down, but the city's nightlife had only just begun. The lights from the streetlamps and cars lit up the night, shocking Ayesha who had never seen such an endless stream of cars and people crowding the paths.

Jiang Chen smiled knowingly, sensing Ayesha's shock and remembering his own similar expression when he first left his hometown. At the time, the magnificence of Wanghai City's night sky had stunned him into silence.

People would only understand once they lived here. Despite the bustling streets, none of it touched your life in any way. Perhaps this was the apathy of the modern world.

Of course, since he had money now, such concerns were no longer his to think about either.

As he called a taxi to a nearby hotel, he tapped her shoulder. The flight to Wanghai City would depart the next morning, and they had to find somewhere to stay for the night.

After showering, Jiang Chen got on the bed right away, ready to sleep, but he was soon overwhelmed by awkwardness from what came afterward.

It was a kingsize bed.

Ayesha, who had just finished showering after him, approached the bed covered in a towel. Her eyes shyly looked down as she gently bit her lips before moving closer to the bed. Blankly staring, Jiang Chen was unaware of his loud gulp.

The exotic foreign beauty with her budding, tender curves...

They didn't say a word.

Ayesha slipped into the sheets, and everything seemed to make sense.

The second time was always easier than the first, her face not showing the slightest discomfort.

Despite his remaining guilt, her expression made Jiang Chen somewhat relieved.

[I didn't force her. And it's not the first time either. Since I already said I'd take care of her, then what's wrong with the second time?]

Very naturally, he placed his hands on her shoulder, causing Ayesha to shyly lower her head and follow his direction.

—

After returning to Wanghai City, Jiang Chen immediately started to work. Since he currently had no permanent residence, he booked the hotel he stayed at last time and settled Ayesha in there. Once he finalized the mansion, she could move there. And although he improved his English skills speaking with her every day, he still arranged for her Han studies.

Once he arranged everything, Jiang Chen immediately contacted Zhang Xinfei, Robert's agent in Wanghai City. According to Robert, he was an assistant for Mr. Chen who specialized in cargo shipments in Hong Kong. With Mr. Chen's extensive influence in Hong Kong, he and Robert had some past dealings in Los Angeles.

Jiang Chen didn't bother asking for the specifics.

Zhang Xinfei was perfectly courteous upon meeting Jiang Chen. Next to him stood a bodyguard that Jiang Chen recognized—the polar bear from the Serbian region, Nick.

"Nice to see you again, buddy," Jiang Chen said sincerely with a light jab at his chest. Despite the fact that Nick didn't speak much, they still fought a difficult battle together, developing a close bond between the two of them.

Nick also punched back as he took off his shades.

"I'm responsible for this guy's safety for now."

Although he was the bodyguard, Jiang Chen knew his true purpose was to prevent this man from running away after realizing the value of the goods. The gold would likely be exported by the cargos under Mr. Chen's name, and once it reached international waters, Robert would then offload the cargo onto his own ship before sending it to South Africa.

"Everything is here. Follow me." Jiang Chen waved his hand and led the way to the storage room where the food had previously been kept.

Nick briefly hesitated. He knew they would be shipping gold, even bringing an inspection personnel, but never would he have thought that Jiang Chen would have stored gold worth billions in a warehouse without any surveillance.

However, Jiang Chen didn't store the gold here, only moving it just before their arrival.

"We have an old saying in Han—the darkest place is under the lamp. If I hired security, this place would look suspicious." Jiang Chen made something up as he uncovered the gold. "It's here, and you can come and verify. I hope you prepared the boxes."

Nick gulped as he nodded dumbfoundedly.



The inspector determined that all of the gold was in fact 24 karat quality and could be sold without further processing. The cumulative weight came to be 11 tons and 240 kilograms. When priced based on the weekly average of US gold, and with a nine percent processing fee, Jiang Chen received via wire the price of 510 million USD.

After receiving the Swiss Bank's confirmation, Jiang Chen nodded. Nick then ordered his subordinates to pack the box and store it in the truck.

The Zhang Xinfei guy chose to stand outside as he knew the role he had in this transaction.

The less he knew, the better it was. He already received a hefty sum from the business, but as for what exactly was inside, it was not his part to know.

# Chapter 53: Five Hundred Million USD

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"See you later." Jiang Chen extended his right hand.

Nick cracked a smile as he took his hand and shook it hard. Then in broken Han, he said, "See you."

As the black vehicles departed, Jiang Chen took a deep breath.

500 million USD.

Converted into RMB, that was 3.1 billion RMB.

Jiang Chen ecstatically gasped as the idea took root.

[I'm rich!]

3.1 billion RMB! It was a number he never could have fathomed in the past! If he put the money into a savings account, the interest would be at least a couple million a year.

He took another breath in an attempt to calm down.

The interest alone would be more than enough to sustain a luxurious lifestyle.

After he let this idea sink in, he slowly inhaled one last time,

enough to finally settle his rampant thoughts.

If his only wish was to be a wealthy man, then this 3.1 billion was enough to last him a lifetime. But to create an empire that spanned across two worlds...

At this, his excitement gradually cooled down, replaced by the fire of ambition in his eyes.

Desire had to power to make people crazy, but it also made some people stronger.

Wealth? That was not enough.

[I can gain more.]

"Hehe, not enough. 3.1 billion is a fraction of what Future Technology Corporation is going to make in market capitalization." He laughed loudly, disregarding the weird looks thrown his way.

[Not only a wealthy man, I will be the richest man! 3.1 billion would be an astronomical number in anyone's pocket, but that's for ordinary people! Am I ordinary? Since I already have enough for a mansion, why don't I purchase a golf course?

What? I don't know how to play golf?

So what if I don't know how to play? I can still show it off!]

And even if it were to draw attention to himself, once the full-sensory, virtual reality computer and other devices were introduced to the market, he would be noticed regardless.

It wasn't as though he did anything illegal either, so he wasn't afraid of the authorities.

The government was not foolish enough to believe time travelers actually existed.

Even if the authority were to develop an interest in him, they would treat a corporation with such advanced technology like a precious jewel. In no way would they be foolish enough to kill the egg-laying chicken. To implement technology helpful to the military, the actual procedure would take more than ten years which was impractical.

With innovation also came the risk of prompting an arms race again, risking a technology leak to espionage activities.

But a top technology giant was different, bringing in billions of tax revenue for the country. It would fundamentally change the country's status in the world.

Even if the authority were to forcefully buy the company and take over, he was not afraid.

With the interdimensional bracelet, no one could catch him. While he wouldn't be able to do anything against them, he could always start anew somewhere else.

Of course, he sincerely hoped to never see this day come.

Maybe once he grew to become an immovable force, the authority wouldn't be able to lay a finger on him.

Anything was possible.

With a cocky expression, he stopped a taxi and headed to Xia Shiyu's apartment.

—

"You're finally back."

Xia Shiyu squeezed the words out after letting Jiang Chen into the room.

"Umm, I encountered some problems," Jiang Chen said as he scratched his head.

Xia Shiyu sighed at his careless expression.

She hadn't been able to sleep well these past few nights, but now

that Jiang Chen was safe, her heart was finally able to settle down.

As for why she was worried, she didn't bother to think it through.

"If you have something for me, just give me a call. You don't have to visit every time," Xia Shiyu said casually.

Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows with a grin on his face. "Why? You have a boyfriend now?"

Xia Shiyu coldly glared at his humor-filled eyes. "No, but you always find me during inappropriate times. Even if it's work-related, it's still not right."

It was already 8 o'clock—allowing a man into her home felt slightly weird. Despite her poker face, this girl took other people's opinions seriously! If not, she wouldn't have fired Jiang Chen over a joke.

There were probably already rumors circulating around with the neighbors.

Jiang Chen easily saw through her intentions.

Although he understood, he still wanted to tease this stubborn girl.

"No worries, overtime until tomorrow morning," Jiang Chen said while laughing without thinking through the implications of his words.

Xia Shiyu's face, however, turned bright red, so threatening that it seemed she would kick him out right there.

"Did I say something wrong?" Jiang Chen asked as he scratched his head once more.

[Seems like I teased her too much.]

Towards this sensitive girl, Jiang Chen could never resist teasing her, but if she actually got angry enough to stop working for him, he would never be able to clean up the mess.

"..." Xia Shiyu's chest heaved violently as she bit her lips before she finally calmed down.

Extra time until tomorrow morning? You plan to spend the night here? What extra night?

Being an assistant was a sensitive profession. Although Xia Shiyu was the CEO by name, she always felt that her work was more of an assistant's.

But Jiang Chen didn't seem to realize the meaning behind his words, and with how easily she became embarrassed, she would never say it out loud.

Xia Shiyu sighed again at Jiang Chen's grin. She grabbed the document she had worked on for an hour before turning off the TV.

"Company growth. I've already submitted the required documentation for the mobile game to the authorities for approval. It didn't have any sensitive information, and we'll most likely receive the results shortly. Even if we released the game now, the loose regulations currently in place would allow it without many repercussions. In fact, this would solve the pressure on our cash flow, and many companies are already doing this." Xia Shiyu propped her black-framed glasses and logically explained the progress to date.

"Excellent, I'm impressed by your ability. As for the early-release plan, there's no need to rush it. We won't allow other people the opportunity to ridicule us, so follow the procedure as planned." Jiang Chen nodded with a smile.

"On the other hand, the company building renovation is almost complete. Including the furniture and one year of rent, the total cost is seventy thousand RMB. I've already submitted the cost to the accountant, and here's a breakdown for you to look through."

"Not bad." Pleased, Jiang Chen nodded and flipped through the sheets.

Despite receiving recognition for her work, she felt more tired for some reason.



She huffed before continuing, "Based on my research, the minimum number of employees required to operate is fourteen. This is taking into account the fact that we don't require game developers. A manager would cost six thousand a month starting salary, server maintenance, legal, customer service..."

"Wait, you can just give the spreadsheet for me to look over. Give me the key takeaway," Jiang Chen said.

"The estimated salary cost would be sixty-eight thousand a month. The necessary equipment would cost around one hundred thousand. If we don't develop ways to generate revenue," she took a deep breath and said slowly, "the company is facing risk of bankruptcy."

No matter how stellar her management, she could not make money out of thin air, particularly for a mobile game that required time to gather the initial investment. Without a proper marketing and operations team to build a large customer base, even with methods such as in-game purchasing, everything was futile without people playing.

"Bankruptcy?" Jiang Chen started to laugh.

"What are you laughing at it? This is your company." Xia Shiyu gave him a dirty look.

Unfortunately, it had no effect on Jiang Chen.

"Ahem, equity infusion." Jiang Chen didn't tease her further and said in a voice full of arrogance.

"This is the only way the company can survive through this initial rough period. Since we don't have the necessary assets, it would be difficult for any bank or venture capital to loan money to us. How much is the president willing to give?" Xia Shiyu felt relieved. Even if it was Jiang Chen's company, she still depended on this job since it all began with her owing him money. The fact that Jiang Chen didn't outright demand it didn't mean she would not pay him back; this was her own stubbornness.

"Is ten million enough?" Jiang Chen asked casually.

Swoosh, the files dropped onto the ground as Xia Shiyu stared at Jiang Chen stunned.

"What? Not enough?" He frowned. "What about one hundred million?"

"Are you making fun of me?" Xia Shiyu gritted her teeth and glared at him. There was no way she believed that Jiang Chen was that wealthy.

What kind of business would make this amount of money in just half a year? The only explanation was that Jiang Chen was joking with her.

"I'm not kidding." Jiang Chen laughed. "You can come with me to the bureau to finish the necessary procedures tomorrow."

Xia Shiyu fell silent. After a long pause, she finally said, "If you're so rich, why would you open a company?"

Jiang Chen thought for a second before rolling his eyes. "Who set the rule that you can't open a business if you're rich?"

She was clearly not happy with this answer.

After another long silence, Jiang Chen didn't expect Xia Shiyu to blurt out, "Do you want to pursue me?"

# Chapter 54: Eagle's Crash Part Two

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(Connected with Chapter 29)

<Communication Terminated>

“Dam\*it!”

He smashed a hanging piece of steel as the orange letters on the dangling screen made Chu Nan even more annoyed.

The corrupted electronic equipment sparked as the circuit was either shorted or destroyed. The shaking helicopter body made him hold his breath.

Once the helicopter body stabilized, he gritted his teeth as he pushed the metal frame on his body with all his might. He glanced at the assistant pilot beside him. That sucker's condition was even worse as the bent steel frame directly penetrated through his ribcage, and his blood splashed everywhere. He looked at the metal frame that has stabbed through his arm and took in a gasp of air. Nevertheless, he felt lucky to be alive.

That distance was 1200 meters from the air.

Apart from his operating skills, it was pure luck to survive from falling that high up.

Chu Nan already used his best effort. When the machine lost its power, he immediately opened the mechanical revolving air turbine on the side of the helicopter. That was important because if he didn't manage to open in the initial stage, then the high-speed air flow may have destroyed it.

Good thing that was still functional.

He connected to the backup circuit board, but the situation was looking grim. His assistant tried to establish a connection with the headquarter. However, he received no response.

He changed into manual operation as he used all his energy to stabilize the helicopter's body. The automatic stabilization system was destroyed, therefore if they started to roll in the air or the back wing gets damaged, even God could not save them. The backup mechanical turbine began to spin rapidly due to the airflow as the high-speed force generated "held" onto the helicopter like a parachute. Under the force of gravity, the head of the helicopter began to tip forward. Once the body turned at a particular angle, Chu Nan immediately pulled the plane up and maximized the upward force of the helicopter.

The head of the helicopter instantly lifted up as the fallen force was broken by the sudden upward force from the mechanical turbine. It was about to land on top of the roof that they crashed into.

Then they crashed into the top floor.

The control was fine, but it was hard to select a landing spot in the city's terrain.

Then warm blood splashed all over Chu Nan's face as he witnessed with his own eyes his assistant being penetrated by the metal frames.

[This doesn't make sense.]

The sudden Electromagnetic Pulse. It was not a simple EMP. The Helicopter-51 was equipment was EMP protective equipment that was the peak of the industry, but the helicopter was paralyzed without being hit directly.

[What was that thing...]

Chu Nan resisted the pain as he took out a dagger and slashed open the locked seatbelt. He carefully glanced at the view outside as he awkwardly untangled his legs from the deformed control panel and slowly crawled outside.

What did this helicopter look like now?

A small portion of the helicopter smashed through the walls of the 12 stories high building as it got pinned down by the protruding metal frames. The ends of the helicopter hung on the edge. The building's quality was superb to be able to withstand the force of impact after a nuclear war. The metal frames cleared exceeded construction standard.

The smallest tremble of the helicopter body made his heart pump at full capacity. The friction noise made him even more nervous.

The bulletproof glass in front of the helicopter was completely shattered which eased his escape. When he was about to climb out, he hesitated and turned back to snatch the pendant on his comrade's neck as well as the ammo clip.

After struggling, Chu Nan finally landed onto the hard cold concrete floor. He looked back at the deformed helicopter body as he quietly examined the pendant inside his palm.

The poorly made pendant was covered by a thick layer of blood.

<Carlo Billman>

He flipped to the back as a sentence was engraved there.

<If possible, I want to hang this in the Arlington National Cemetery>

The assistant pilot was a US Spanish decedent. He was previously a pilot in NATO. However, the concept of a country didn't exist anymore as plenty of foreigners live in Liuding town with most being NATO soldiers before the war.

When PAC, NATO, and CCCP led World Alliance Council and left

the torn land by sending all the “hope” into space, no one believed in authority anymore. When faced with zombies and mutants, all humans belong to the same species.

Not including mutated humans or cannibals.

He checked the equipment on his body before he lifted his hands and touched the back of his neck with his fingers.

It was a chip called “dictator chip,” but because it has added complex functions such as long range communication, the chip was less effective compared to the Sixth Street produced “slavery chip.”

<Offline>

Chu Nan tried multiple times but did not manage to establish any connection.

“Dam\* it, is this broken?”

The “bomb” behind the back of his neck was broken, but he couldn’t tell if he was content or sad.

Content that he was free.

Sad that freedom didn’t mean anything on the wasteland. There was food in Liuding town so who cared about freedom.



Returning to Liuding was not a possibility since the people there probably recorded him as dead. A rescue was even more out of the question as only the metal debris of a previous one hundred thousand crystal equipment remained here. The pilot's worth was not even greater than the chip on the back of his neck.

"Whatever, I'll see." He forced a smile as he put the pendant into the pocket and took out his pistol.

Including the one clip in the gun, he still had five magazines left. Two blood needles, a roll of bandage, EP was returning to normal, a dagger, and six B grade nutrient supply. Because he was part of the air force, the nutrient supply was higher quality.

He opened the EP radiation monitor system and determined based on the safe radiation level that this was a rural area, but he didn't know where exactly he was.

EP did not download the map in the area.

He checked his equipment once again before he turned his head to look at the body and the crashed helicopter. He lowered his head and walked away.

Although he did receive ground training, he never encountered a situation like this. Ordinary survivors would never target planes. Air-based EMP weapons did exist but were extremely rare. Most of them were destroyed in the war.

It was also the first time he heard that a mutant could use an EMP or a similar pulse weapon.

Maybe his assistant pilot has encountered his situation before, but he didn't manage to survive.

“Stairs cleared.”

Just like practice, Chu Nan mumbled as he directed with his pistol and moved downstairs.

[If it is a zombie, then use the dagger to stab the eye area. If it is a screamer, then use shock grenade for cover. If it is Roshan or Death Claw... let's hope that never happens.]

The elevator was not functional. The building was an office complex before the war. The majority of the zombies were concentrated in the grand hall as the occasional straggler in the hallway was killed with his swift knife action. For small problems, it would be better to avoid using his gun. His body condition with the D level genetic vaccine easily handled the combat requirement.

The only disappointing fact was that he didn't unlock a genetic ability.

When both of his feet touched the ground, Chu Nan let out a sigh. He gazed into the sky and determined it was around 3 in the afternoon.

5 o'clock was when the street was no longer safe. The night usually fell at 6 which meant that walking on the street would equal suicide.

The night in Wanghai city belonged to the zombies.

"I need to find a survival camp, or find a place to stay for the night." Chu Nan scanned around as he walked to the end of the street.

The abandoned cars on the road still maintained the same look since the moment war erupted. Since the hotspot of the war was in the middle of the city, people would escape to the rural areas.

Therefore, most of the vehicles would point in the direction of the rural area.

He had examined the cars before he walked into the direction away from city center.

Anywhere is better than the city center.

That's the one common conception every survivor had.

—

The sky began to turn yellow as the sun had fallen to the edge of

the horizon. The cast of the yellowish green ray through the radiation dust had a vibe of ominous to it.

He didn't know how long he walked before it began to turn dark. Chu Nan glanced at the zombies beside him as they've already begun to howl. In a while, those zombies would start to prey on living creatures.

[Should I find somewhere to stay for the night?]

Chu Nan thought as he began to hasten his steps.

When he turned around another corner, he saw a scene that shocked him.

A woman was tied to an electric pole in the middle of the street. She barely wore anything as zombies circled around. She was afraid to call help.

With his pilot vision, he could even make out the look of despair on the rather lovely face.

Someone obviously tied her.

“Fu\*k, which bastard did such a disgusting prank,” Chu Nan cursed as he cautiously scanned around before he walked towards the woman.

When he approached her, the pleading eyes full of hope locked onto him. He took out the dagger and cut open the rope.

Perhaps because she had just escaped the terrifying experience that chained her there, the woman hugged him as she cried.

“Thanks, Thank you.” It was a soothing voice.

“Ok, don’t worry, you are okay now.” It was the first time he encountered this situation which made him unsure of what he should do. He only patted the woman’s back clumsily to comfort her.

[The survivors in Wanghai are cruel to this point?]

He cursed at the heinous act that people committed to her as Chu Nan was just about to ask where the nearest survival camp was.

But at this moment, a barrel-like object pressed against his head again.

“Ha, buddy, you are the first dumba\*s to fall for it.”

Sweat began to roll down his back as his hand slightly move, but he realized a dagger was pressed against his back.

That dagger was held by a delicate hand.

At the same time, a bunch of men in mohawks and tattoos walked out from the empty shops. They held some knock-off rifles and one simply carried a bat.

The bald head, holding a cigarette, was the head of the group as he walked in front of Chu Nan. He raised his eyebrows as he patted the woman's face and said in a mocking voice.

“Nice job, bit\*h.”

Just like a dog.

An unhealthy red flush appeared on her face as she tried to please the man that just embarrassed her.

The cruel reality sent a shiver down Chu Nan's spine while cold sweat rolled down his face.

Despite living in the apocalypse for so many years, it was the first time he saw anything like this.

[Is she still a human being?]

“Two blood needles, one bandage, damn, six B-grade nutrient supply! Boss, it's a big fish!” A man who took off his pistol and searched him shouted in surprise.

The zombies mindlessly looked in their direction, but despite the

noise, there was still two hours before night fell.

The bald head looked at Chu Nan full of interest.

“Name?”

“Chu Nan.” There was nothing to hide since his EP had all the information.

“Where are you from?”

“Liuding town. Pilot.”

“Where’s your plane?” Greed flashed through the bald head’s eye. He did not look cautious at all when he heard Chu Nan say that.

“Crashed.”

“Hehe.” The bald head smiled and didn’t say anything. He signaled his men to tie him up.

“If you are only here to rob me, you have already achieved that. You can have everything, let me go?” Chu Nan said calmly.

The bald head raised his eyebrows as he suddenly threw a punch in his face.

He suppressed his anger as he resisted the sharp pain on his left cheek. Chu Nan glared at the bald head.

“You are a captive so shut up,” he cursed as he extinguished the cigarette on Chu Nan’s face before he waved his hand. “Take him back.”

He looked at the dumba\*s that took the bait as he laughed mockingly. He then kicked the half kneeling woman in front of him, but the same unhealthy flush of red and a smile to please appeared.

The woman had no name and was just a slave. Perhaps she just an independent traveler before? He didn’t remember when she was captured, nor did he care how they trained her to be like this. But he remembered clearly how she became part of his asset.

Last month, he managed to find a target and proved it was a big fish.

His boss sent an entire raid team, but the Lu Renjia dumba\*s ruined everything. How confident was he to order all those men to go into a confined building? He didn’t even check if there were other entrances or sewerage exits.

Only one person returned out of a group of a dozen.

Although his boss was angry, he didn’t blame him as he provided



the clue. He took Lu Renjia and the other captain's woman and distributed all their assets to other subordinates.

It was a form of discipline, but also an incentive. For the bandits like Huizhong Mercenaries, they needed this type of brutality to bond together.

So, this dog like "thing" was given to Zhou Guoping. Although this boss didn't punish him, he did remove him from the easy job of staying in the Sixth Street and made him rob survivors.

It was harder to capture a survivor on the wasteland than a mutant rat. Most of the people that survived till now were as sharp as a knife edge. The dumb ones were the people that never left the camps. Their return for this month was almost zero.

Pilot? That's a big fish

Zhou Guoping put the rifle on his shoulder and led his men to the camp.

# Chapter 55: Purchasing a Mansion

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“Do you want to ask me out?”

It was an unexpected question that silenced the room.

“What?!” Jiang Chen suddenly realized what she had asked and almost fell off the sofa. He stared at Xia Shiyu and was dumbfounded by the question.

He didn’t understand where her logic came from. How did she come up with the “I want to ask you out”?

“The existence of the corporation serves one purpose which is to create profit. If you already have a method in which you could generate a profit greater than one hundred million within half a year, then why would you invest the hard earned profit into a technology industry which poses the highest risk?” Xia Shiyu had paused before she explained.

To be honest, although she may get frustrated by his grin and unserious attitude from time to time, she never disliked Jiang Chen. Also, she felt an emotion she never experienced before interacting with him.

Relieved? Relaxed? It was hard to say.

These feelings made her confused.

The straightforward and unexpected question was the result of her confused emotions.

She suspected before that Jiang Chen created this company as an excuse to date her.

[When did he start to like me? When he worked at the clothing store? I seemed to have hurt him. Because of the pain I had brought him, it has forced him to transition to where he is now.]

Xia Shiyu was conflicted. She hated the idea of becoming a trophy. She always wanted to use her determination to prove her ability and create her own personal worth.

When she was in university, a lot of rich guys chased after her and even promised her job opportunities in reputable firms, and even management positions right away. But Xia Shiyu rejected all of them. She had her own pride, a pride backed by ability. Although she was born into an ordinary family, what she possessed was anything but normal.

Looks are important in this day and age, but it is not everything. Most people still worked diligently.

However, she felt conflicted with Jiang Chen.

She guessed that Jiang Chen created this company just to keep her here. He didn't have any aspirations with the company. The blueprinted he painted were just bloated statements to make her

feel better.

[Because I owed him? No, then what is it?] Xia Shiyu couldn't think it through.

Women are stubborn creatures that once they made up their mind, they would selectively ignore all other points that negate the point. For example the potential value of the mobile game, as well as investing one hundred million just for her.

All those counter arguments have been fully ignored.

"I don't understand, one hundred million RMB. If you invest it in real estate, with the return now..."

"Because I want to experience what it feels like to be at the top," Jiang Chen interrupted her.

Xia Shiyu was confused by the odd answer as she stared at Jiang Chen blankly.

"One hundred million? Hehe, it would only be decimals compared to the future market capitalization of Future Technology. I did make a lot of money, but putting it in a savings account would never bring me to the top. One million interests a year would take me years to double my investment. As to if it is for you? Hehe, I could bang girls for years with one hundred million." He didn't avoid the derogatory words as he stood up and headed straight to the door, leaving Xia Shiyu shocked in place.

[So that's the reason? Then it should be okay...]

She gazed mindlessly at the door as she didn't know how he had the confidence to say those things, and couldn't believe that she bought into it.

[Not because of me?]

She didn't know why a hint of disappointment crept into her heart.

He closed the door and forced a smile at the door behind him.

[Was I too harsh?]

But that girl, how great did she feel about herself to have made a conclusion like that?]

He shook his head as he took a deep breath and walked downstairs.

However, he didn't even realize that, for a split moment, his heartbeat hastened.

The next morning, Jiang Chen took Ayesha to try some steamy buns. He watched as the girl devoured the food and he felt his heart ache at the scene. The image reminded him of Sun Jiao. How

is she doing? Yao Yao? Is her body getting better?

He remembered the times in the apocalypse as a smile appeared on his face.

Ayesha peaked at the smile as she felt a stream of warmth flowing inside her.

Maybe it's time to revisit them. Jiang Chen in deep thought did not notice the girl's vision as he gazed at the steam rising from the congee.

After breakfast, Ayesha went to her Chinese lesson. Jiang Chen, instead, took a taxi to Xia Shiyu's place and picked her up to go to the bureau for the equity infusion process.

Jiang Chen initially felt nervous as he was afraid it would be awkward because yesterday he only left a brief explanation before running away. Now that he thought about, he did escape the conversation.

But he clearly overthought it as Xia Shiyu acted as if nothing had happened. When she saw that he didn't react to anything, she got into the taxi and sat beside him.

"How was your sleep last night?" Jiang Chen didn't know how to start the conversation, so he asked nonchalantly.

Xia Shiyu rolled her eyes and didn't respond. She just took out a

piece of document and stuffed it into Jiang Chen's lap.

“There is a career fair next Wednesday at Wanghai University. I have managed to secure a spot there, and I hope you can come with me as the company's president.”

“No problem, do you have time this afternoon.” Jiang Chen accepted without hesitation as he then asked another question right away.

“Yes, what's happening?”

“Go house hunting with me.” Jiang Chen shrugged as he asked with his thick skin.

“Is this considered business or personal?” Xia Shiyu let out a sigh.

“Umm, you promised me. It should be considered personal.”

Xia Shiyu looked at the side of Jiang Chen's face as she subconsciously bit her lips.

She was about to reject him, but the words never came out. Why is this happening? She still didn't fully understand.

The night before, Jiang Chen followed Robert's instruction to wire one hundred million USD from his Swiss bank account to his

account here. Of course, the money was already converted based on current exchange rate along with some fees into RMB.

It was an interesting method with a low price. Robert promised that there won't be any legal problems.

He looked at the trail of zeros in his bank account on his phone as he laughed hysterically at the screen for a while before he finally closed his phone. As to Xia Shiyu's curious gaze, he didn't bother to explain it and simply closed his eyes.

[Should I drive a Lamborghini? Or a Bentley? This is such a difficult decision.]

Xia Shiyu was indeed an organized person as she seemed to be a perfect fit to do the assistant job. No, the CEO job. Jiang Chen can "do" the assistant role.

Xia Shiyu already prepared the necessary documents and familiarized herself with the legal process. Jiang Chen had scanned the document before he signed. Future Technology's equity had a trail of zeros added to it.

Jiang Chen noticed that when he wrote one hundred million into the document, the eyes of the customer service representative across the counter were flashing stares at him.

Money is the root of evil. This is too funny.



Before he would have despised it, but now he only wanted to laugh.

“One hundred million of liquid asset. This is unbelievable.” With trembling hands, Xia Shiyu looked at the documents. She was still shocked by the series of events.

Although she was a store manager that had exposure to the world before, she was still too young.

“This is only the initial plan, I plan to make this mobile game into a world-class masterpiece. With this plan, it wouldn't be difficult to recover the initial investment.” Jiang Chen opened the door for Xia Shiyu like a gentleman.

“So you do know something.” Xia Shiyu glanced at Jiang Chen with surprise in her eyes. She thought that Jiang Chen wanted to let her handle this pile of mess.

For a mobile game, it would damage its long term profitability if the company chased after short-term returns and cash generation. The better strategy would always be to not focus on short term losses.

“You have to understand the difference between the emperor and the general. You are in charge of fighting the war, but I, only need to tell you where to fight.” Jiang Chen cockily extended his finger and pointed around which made Xia Shiyu roll her eyes.

“I do feel like I am doing a servant’s work.”

“Haha, that’s your illusion. But to be fair, your mood seems to be a lot brighter. You can even make a joke or two now,” Jiang Chen looked at Xia Shiyu with surprise as he mocked her.

“Where are we going now? Mr. President.” Xia Shiyu casually avoided the topic.

“Wanhua Real Estate, the one in the city center,” Jiang Chen told the taxi driver, who clearly judged the two of them in the back.

If he wanted to buy a mansion, then he obviously would go to the company’s best location. It would be too low class to keep living in the hotel.

“...”Xia Shiyu didn’t say anything as she quietly followed his instructions.

Wanhua Real Estate, the industry leader in Wanghai city with a market capitalization of 1.327 trillion and part of the Fortune 500 companies. The reason why he chose to purchase the mansion here was that he had no understanding of the real estate market. Since he heard the company’s name a couple of times in the news before, he decided to buy it there.

When he got off the taxi, a magnificent building stood tall in front him. The marble floor was covered with clean red carpets. The unique carvings decorated the sides of the stairs. The

combination of modernism and classicalness perfectly meshed together to display the high-end elegance of the building. The vibe of the design made people stop and envy the greatness of the building. The occasional passer would subconsciously avoid the vivid red carpet.

It was like a palace that stood heavenly above the ground.

The design of the building was to emphasize the purchaser's class and force the peasants to stay away.

To put it simply, they didn't want people who could not afford the place to enter the building.

The moment Jiang Chen stood on the carpet, he was even scared to take a step further. But then he remembered that he was a billionaire now, so how could he not have the confidence. So he took giant strides towards the door.

Wanhua Real Estate didn't know that just in the few seconds, he almost missed a deal that could earn millions because of that stupid design.

This was an age that belonged to the new millionaires.

Xia Shiyu, instead, presumed a blank look as she followed Jiang Chen naturally. Not because she was used to the high-class life, just that she wasn't the one purchasing the house.

“Welcome, Miss and Mister.” The two greeters in the front bowed to Jiang Chen and Xia Shiyu in synchrony. They wore clean and elegant Qipaos with their hair tied in a ponytail, along with their flawless skin and delicate face. Even the greeters were gorgeous girls which further emphasized the luxury of this real estate company.

The greeter looked strangely at Jiang Chen as this was the first time she saw someone take a Taxi to purchase real estate.

Although she was curious, she still must follow the rules of the company and be courteous. The company rules stated clearly that no judgment should be made based on impressions. Violators will be fired even if it was a manager that broke the rule. This was to avoid accidentally disrespecting wealthy people dressed in regular clothes.

There were plenty of people that liked to act low profile.

High salary equals high expectation, which is the culture of Wanhua Real Estate.

She was a greeter and therefore didn't need to bother with these things. Even if Jiang Chen was here to look for trouble, that's security's concern.

Jiang Chen didn't bother with what they thought as he walked into the grand hall in full, confident strides. Xia Shiyu behind him only glanced at the greeter with her head lowered before she left.

Marble pillars with stone floors, the giant crystal chandelier drew the attention of every visitor like a bright diamond. The elegant design of the grand hall filled Jiang Chen with expectations for the mansion he was going to purchase. If they would design the headquarter with such radiance, then the house they sell must be comparable.

The building itself was a great advertisement.

But when he saw the receptionist, he stood shocked in place.

## Chapter 56: The Surprising Reunion

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“Hello, Sir, what type and what unit would you... It’s you?!”

The youthful reception behind the table courteously explained to Jiang Chen, but when she saw his face, her eyes popped wide open.

“This is a small world.” Jiang Chen forced a smile.

The blonde curls, the delicate nose, and her mouth along with eyes full of “pureness” behind a round framed glasses. The student vibe made her even more attractive.

Though she certainly pretending to be younger than her actual age.

Fang Yuanyuan, a name that broke his heart.

When he was in university, he never had a girlfriend, or more accurately, never successfully chased after a girl. Not that he looked bad as he was confident of his looks, but the fact was he was poor. This girl called Fang Yuanyuan was a girl that he had chased after, and also the last one he ever pursued. He still remembered that they met at a gathering.

The reason why he liked her was because of her energy, as well as the faint dimples when she smiled. Fang Yuanyuan didn’t keep her distance with Jiang Chen because he was poor, she always warmly said hi to him, and they chatted on Wechat.

For Jiang Chen who was less popular among girls, she was like an angel to him. What made him feel even more strongly was that he “felt” that she also liked him back.

But the reality proved that it was a rookie mistake.

A girl being nice to you could also be nice to other people. The illusion of “she likes me” was often just a one-sided imagination. Being close to you was only because you could be used or she was just bored. Rejecting you because you were friendzoned since the beginning.

If she liked you, she would have asked you out already or hinted at you to ask her out.

Don't be mistaken, if she blinked her big eyes full of cuteness at you that's not the boyfriend, it's not because she is innocent, but rather “I am thirsty, can you buy me a Starbucks. Of course, the noun could be changed to pizza hut or Louis Vuitton.

These types of innocent acting girl, people refer to them as green tea bitch.

If you don't like me, just tell me to fu\*k off! Why are you acting close to me?

Of course, Jiang Chen admitted that it was dumb of him to be involved in the first place. Every basic girl always had some boys

run around her. One held her bag; one paid for her, one alleviated her physical needs...

That was the definition of being naïve. He really didn't know something like this would happen.

It was one day during Jiang Chen's second year of university that he asked Fang Yuanyuan out to a movie. The movie was Liu Yao's <That Year>.

And then, there was no and then. He finally woke up, woke up from the illusion that year.

He realized it was a one-sided emotion.

After rejecting the person, to continuously expect the person to act like a “best friend”, to expect they would continue to revolve around you and your life, that was greed.

In the end, she ripped off the façade of innocence and began to mock him for being weak and useless.

Shocked, confused.

Within the next two years, every time they passed by each other, she would always hasten her steps and walk away pretending not to know him. It was better that way as it would be awkward otherwise. He had already put this unhappy memory into the back of his head. Especially after his roommate told him that, “I didn't



tell you before because I was afraid that you would be angry, but that Fang Yuanyuan girl has an ambiguous relationship with other people at the same time.

There was no reason to discuss whose fault it was.

But it was after that moment that he no longer believed in fidelity.

Especially after he possessed the financial capability, he was out of control. But this was another story to be told.

—

He just didn't expect that one year after graduation they would encounter again.

In his memory, Fang Yuanyuan was an art major, but she came into the real estate business. It was not odd since he did study a supposedly good major, mechanical engineering, but still sold clothes after graduation.

The feeling to meet an old friend felt odd to Jiang Chen.

“You, why would you come here.” The girl looked around nervously as she lowered her voice and said in a begging tone, “please, don't come bother me anymore, you and I won't happen.”

“I think you are mistaken.” Jiang Chen awkwardly looked at Fang Yuanyuan.

Although she had hurt him before, he didn’t have the desire to seek revenge.

What happened before was all buried in dust. Yes, Fang Yuanyuan did hurt him, but through her perspective, she didn’t do anything wrong since Jiang Chen couldn’t give her the life she wanted.

Also, it’s hard to debate who actually gained more from her rejection.

“How did you find out where I worked?” She gritted her teeth as she locked her eyes on Jiang Chen. “Leave, I don’t want to see. I won’t accept you.”

Jing Chen was completely dumbfounded.

[What? Do I need your permission to buy a house? You are mistaking this whole thing.]

But Fang Yuanyuan didn’t give Jiang Chen the chance to explain as she acted defiantly.

As to why she rejected so dramatically, it was because of something that happened recently.

A middle-aged business man that recently bought a second-hand house from here proposed to her. The reason behind it was she tricked the bald, middle-aged man to think that a cute girl had fallen in love with him, so he hot-headedly signed his name on the contract.

But when the middle-aged men showed up with ninety-nine roses to her workplace...

The exact details will not be discussed, but in short, the guy got kicked out by security. Because of this, the manager warned her. Even if the implicit rules within this industry was not new, you still have to watch your tail.

She was terrified that Jiang Chen would pull something by directly proposing to her.

If he made a fool of himself here and demanded her to marry him, even if the security would kick him out, she would be the laughing stock between her colleagues, and it would even affect her bonus this month.

She selectively ignored the woman that stood behind Jiang Chen, a woman that would embarrass Fang Yuanyuan not only just in looks.

“You know her?” Xia Shiyu in offline mode suddenly opened her mouth with a mischievous look.

[Why is it so cold here, is the AC too low?] Jiang Chen shivered.

“I guess.” Jiang Chen awkwardly answered.

This is ruining the mood, let's try a different place then.

With Fang Yuanyuan's arrogant act, Jiang Chen wasn't in the mood anymore. He didn't even bother explaining as he was ready to turn around.

Seeing Jiang Chen leave in “embarrassment”, Fang Yuanyuan let out a breath as she was amazed by her cunningness.

Good thing I acted with certainty. Haha, dumba\*s.

“A toad that wants to date the swan.” (To crave for what one is not worthy of.)

Jiang Chen stopped, although it was faint, it didn't escape his ear.

Xia Shiyu also stopped; however, she looked it like she was happy to see the conflict unfold. Jiang Chen noticed and gave her a dirty look before he gradually turned around and walked in front of the reception.

“What, what do you want? I am calling the security.” Fang

Yuanyuan saw that Jiang Chen was walking towards her with a fierce look as she began to feel nervous. She started to stutter.

“Nothing. What? A receptionist can reject the customer’s rights to buy a house?” Even if you don’t want me to buy, I will buy it here, and I will buy it from someone else right in front of you.

Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows as he glanced at the security guards walking over.

A deathly stare.

[This guy killed people before?!]

The security guard suddenly felt fear overcome him as cold sweat rolled down his forehead.

Although Jiang Chen didn’t intentionally expose anything, the bloodiness stained from the chaotic apocalypse crept into the security guard’s mind through his grim gaze.

His instinct from being in the gang told him that he would not be able to handle the young man in front of him. He wasn’t planning to start a fight, but momentum wise he already lost out.

The air in the room started to tense up.

At this moment, an apologetic voice suddenly alleviated all the

tension in the air.

“Of course she doesn’t have the right, honorable sir. I apologize for this poor demeanor of our company’s reception.”

## Chapter 57: Who's the Swan?

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“Of course she doesn't have the right, honorable sir. I apologize for the poor demeanor of our company's receptionist.”

Huang Li's songbird voice floated from the back of the hall. A gorgeous woman in black walked out in elegant steps as she lowered her body slightly to express her apology.

Flawless skin, delicate face, and on top of the seductive eyes were a pair of finely drawn eyebrows. Below the perfect nose of hers was a small mouth. The vivid red lipstick did not make her look slightly ordinary. Instead, it radiated her elegance. Her black uniform perfectly outlined the curves of her body as the pencil skirt pressed against the black stockings, mysterious and seductive.

The opening in front of her shirt exposed the white and deep valley in front of her. She was created by God in perfection.

Just in beauty, she was even slightly more attractive than Xia Shiyu.

Of course, it was somewhat unfair since Xia Shiyu would always be expressionless and never really put on makeup. Her wardrobe comprised of professional clothing and her primary purpose was to go to the bureau with Jiang Chen, and house hunting only happened because of an agreement.

An attractive woman mediating the situation was much more

efficient.

The sincere apology already diminished most of Jiang Chen's anger away.

It was not a big deal to start with since their manager already apologized, he didn't want to persist further.

"Mhmm, it's okay."

[This girl is attractive.]

Jiang Chen tried to hide his gulping. For some reason, he felt someone staring at him questionably.

Perhaps confident with her own beauty, or perhaps she had seen too many guys embarrass themselves in front of her.

Xiao Mengying didn't mind as she steered the conversation.

"I am the sales manager here. My name is Xiao Mengying, you can call me Yingying. Mister. What type of unit would you like to purchase? I have extensive experience in selecting the right units for my customer." As she spoke, she was also examining Jiang Chen. Although Jiang Chen didn't wear anything high end, nor did he exhibit class in his actions, in the world filled with newly emerging millionaires, it was nearly impossible to tell who had money. Since he walked into this place, it proved that he was definitely financially capable.



When she noticed Xia Shiyu, Xiao Mengying was even more certain of her guess. To be able to walk in here with a girl as attractive as her, looks would not do justice. Xiao Mengying also noticed that the expressionless beauty was not this guy's wife, but perhaps played a mistress or assistant role. The hint of "dislike" made her even more confident.

Her light tone made the two feel a lot closer, Jiang Chen's intention to act arrogantly faded away.

Truthfully speaking, although he liked to act arrogantly, he was nice the majority of the time.

"I want to buy a comfortable mansion, do you have any recommendations?" Jiang Chen regathered his thought from staring at the stunning beauty as he said with a smile.

"Mansion?" Xiao Mengying was slightly shocked. She originally thought Jiang Chen only wanted to buy an apartment at a high-end location, it was the deal that she had done the most. But Jiang Chen straight up wanted purchase a mansion, the cheapest mansion in Wanghai was at least ten million. With the 0.8% commission her company promised, this one deal would be more than several deals combined.

Xiao Mengying's eyes immediately lit up as the way she looked at Jiang Chen held more hidden seduction.

"I apologize." Xiao Mengying gently lowered her body as she

apologized for her shocked look, at the same time intentionally exposing her cleavage slightly more.

She heard the gulping sound as a trace of a satisfied smile appeared on her face.

All men were perverts. If they were not, it's the girl not being attractive enough.

She was extremely confident with herself.

"Sir, if you want to purchase a mansion, please follow me to the VIP room. Any deal over five million will be done in the VIP room to provide the best quality service, I hope you don't mind."

"I don't mind, lead the way." Jiang Chen smiled.

"Sir, please come over here." Xiao Mengying smiled delicately as she leaned forward with a pleasing gesture.

Xia Shiyu frowned slightly. She didn't know why, but she disliked this woman. Not because she was jealous of the way she looked, it was the fact that she felt a sense of danger around her. Where did the feeling come from? She couldn't think it through, but she just faintly had this feeling.

Although annoyed, she could only let out a sigh and follow Jiang Chen since he was the one buying.

When she noticed that Jiang Chen's eyes locked onto Xiao Mengying's round butt, she felt a strange annoyance and frustration. But then she thought, he is not my boyfriend, why am I angry?

[This doesn't make sense.]

She was in the middle of a conflicting set of logics as she began to feel a frustration she was not accustomed to.

Xia Shiyu's facial expression change, of course, didn't escape Xiao Mengying's eyes. She had spent a few years within a melting pot known as society as she advanced from a normal salesperson to where she was now. Her attention to body language was superb.

Jealous but didn't react meant that the two were still in the dubious face of the relationship. Xiao Mengying saw through the exact state of their relationship.

There were so many opportunities to be taken then, as a faint smiled crept onto Xiao Mengying's face.

A lot of friends are also real estate salespeople, but they eventually became the owner of the house they sold. It not only depended on the look but also their cunningness.

She was making plans in her mind. If this Mr. Jiang would purchase a mansion over fifty million, then it would be worth it

for her to make a move. Since sales in real estate was a career with a time limit, no one would want to buy a house from an old woman. Even if she took care of herself, the age ceiling was still around thirty years old. With her current salary including commission, she could make almost one million. But of course, this type of salary was unsustainable. With the current housing market condition, despite prices still increasing, the volume decreased significantly compared to 2008. The company fired a group of people just last month. Although it would never affect her as the star salesperson, the current industry trend forced her to consider her options.

Marrying rich was not a terrible choice.

When she thought about all this, Xiao Mengying's invasive vision scanned across the expressionless Xia Shiyu. She was ready to steal her man.

Jiang Chen who walked beside her didn't notice the change in this beauty's expression. He gave Fang Yuanyuan, who was frozen in place, a long meaningful look before going into the VIP room.

[Who's the swan? Who's the toad? Dumba\*s.]

He cursed satisfyingly in his mind as he felt joy flow through his body. His pride and sense of revenge were both fulfilled.

Three people with their own thoughts left the grand hall and left only Fang Yuanyuan standing blankly at the front desk.

Regret? Unwillingness? Confusion? Jealousy? Or all of them.

A ten million dollar deal just scathed by her.

Jiang Chen? Him? How could he buy a mansion!? He couldn't even afford Pizza Hut? This is impossible!

A million thoughts flashed through her mind which made her feel surreal.

But, it was too late to regret. Fang Yuanyuan could never fight off the meat from her manager's mouth. Especially since she had already offended Jiang Chen

The toad that wanted to date the swan?

Who's the toad? Who's the swan now?

There was no way he could like her now. Fang Yuanyuan only felt regret submerge her completely because of her irrational reaction. She could have easily used their previous relationship to eat the "meat," but she gave it away with her own quick judgment.

At the same time, a slim hope was still in her mind. She knew Jiang Chen's family background and knew where he worked after the graduation. A clothing store salesperson would never afford a mansion. He must be lying. It was an elaborate scheme to embarrass me.

Her colleagues did not have the slightest attempt to hide their mockery. They knew well that they would not beat Xiao Mengying. But this girl gave away the meat in her mouth, that was so dumb.

Fang Yuanyuan couldn't bother with her colleague's expression as she fell into deep despair and regret, unable to escape from what happened.

She regretted that three years ago she did not say yes to Jiang Chen.

At the same time, she cursed and thought everything was set up to mock her.

When a person sank into irrationality, their intelligence would be drawn into oblivion.

There is not a lot of second chances in the world, or else everyone would be a millionaire.

## Chapter 58: The Intimacy in the Car

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“Is Mr. Jiang buying the mansion for investment purposes or for personal use?”

“For myself. Is there a difference?”

Perhaps intentional, after Xiao Mengying seated Jiang Chen, she directly sat beside him. The leather sofa here was for two people, so Xia Shiyu had to sit on the single sofa.

Because they were too close, Jiang Chen could smell the Gardenia fragrance. Due to the angle they were seated in, if he wanted to look at the documents in Xiao Mingying's hands, his eyes inevitably caught the red bra inside her V-neck.

[I do apologize, this is by no means intentional.]

The arousing scene made Jiang Chen straighten his back and adjust the way he sat to avoid being too obvious.

The small movements did not escape Xiao Mengying's sharp eyes as her tongue rolled across her bright red lips. Xiao Mengying leaned her body forward even further to make it look like she was providing a better angle for the customer to read the documents at, but the real intention was to show the scenery of her cleavage more.

“If the purpose is to invest, then the appreciation value potential

is what Sir you should consider. But if it is for personal living, then the environment and amenities are the top considerations. Based on your needs sir, I recommend this mansion in the Linjiang Area. The mansion is within the newly developed upper-class community, the amenities and the surrounding area are all world class. The mansion is three stories tall with a basement. It is equipped with a double garage as well as a private front yard. The position of the mansion is facing the river which directly oversees the beauty of the river. If Sir you are into high class living, then you must take serious consideration of this mansion...”

Xia Shiyu sat silently on the side with her eyes locked onto the slim distance between Jiang Chen and Xiao Mengying’s arm.

She felt an unexplainable frustration.

“12 million?” Jiang Chen frowned.

Xiao Mingying carefully examined Jiang Chen’s facial expression. She sensed that Jiang Chen was not too happy with the price as she added, “Sir, Wanhua Real Estate’s top priority is our homebuyer’s comfort. Although the price is a bit high, ...”

“It’s not the problem with the price. Well, it is. Let’s not waste any time. Show me the most expensive mansion,” Jiang Chen said right away.

Xiao Mengying first felt disappointed, but when Jiang Chen said that, she paused to think through what she had just heard before her face turned ecstatic.



“Okay, sir, please look at this mansion.” Xiao Mengying’s tone became even sweeter as her delicate fingers quickly flipped through the documents. She found a picture of the mansion. Perhaps it was an illusion, but Jiang Chen felt this woman was getting even closer to him.

“This mansion is our company’s masterfully crafted sample building to demonstrate our excellence in design. Located in Wanghai City Mingxin Area, among the high-class mansion complex. It is located on the upstream of the river and has a direct view of it. The mansion’s design is based on a combination of classical and modern theory and was skillfully designed by the world class architect K. Garen.

The compact design not only saves addition space, but it also eases traveling between different units of the mansion. The mansion is four stories high with a basement attached. The garage is a quadruple garage. It is also built with a 10m by 10m private pool with a mobile roof design. In the summer, it can be used for a pool party, and in the winter the roof can be closed to replicate a hot spring environment.

The private garden in the front of mansion could be used for a BBQ party, which is the current trend of the upper-class society. The helicopter pad on the roof could be used for takeoffs and landings of small to mid-sized helicopters. The open balcony on the other side has a full view of the beautiful scenery of the river.

Additionally, to ensure the safety and security of our homebuyer, our company has provided that the community’s security measure

is the highest within Wanghai city. This mansion's security measure, in particular, is the top priority for our security team. The value of this mansion is superb. The area is 2100 square meters with a total cost of 240 million RMB."

Listening to Xiao Mengying's pleasant voice, Jiang Chen carefully examined the details of the mansion.

Very pleased! Very pleased with every aspect of this mansion.

The security was top notch, the geographical location was also not too far from the mansion.

The more important thing was that this building was great to show off.

"Xia Shiyu, what do you think about this one?" Jiang Chen handed the documents to Xia Shiyu.

"Mhmm, not bad."

Jiang Chen examined Xia Shiyu's facial expression confusedly, he sensed that her mind was somewhere else.

"Do you not feel okay?" Jiang Chen was concerned.

"Mhmm, a little. I want to go back now," Xia Shiyu answered absent-mindedly as she suddenly stood up and walked to the door.

“Miss Xia, if you are not feeling okay, I can lend my car to my colleague and send you home, or to the nearest hospital. Health is an important issue, and please be careful.” Seeing the “inconvenient” personal leave, Xiao Mengying was glad, but she didn’t show it on her face. Instead, she looked genuinely concerned.

“Thank you then.” Xia Shiyu didn’t say no as she did feel a bit sick.

Perhaps it was from this morning? But she didn’t seem too worried.

The greeter standing on the side took Xiao Mengying’s car key and smiled at Xia Shiyu before both of them left the VIP room.

“Mr. Jiang, if you are sure about your choice, I can accompany you to take a tour of the mansion,” Xiao Mengying said as happily pressed her body against Jiang Chen’s arm. Although usually a guarantee fee must be paid to do so, that was for the regular customer. For a VIP customer like him, it was not necessary.

Jiang Chen hesitated before he finally nodded. Although he wanted Xia Shiyu to accompany him to give him some advice, since she felt sick, that wouldn’t work. She did look through the pictures and said it was okay.

[After taking care of this, I’ll go visit her place. Although it is just a cold, no one is there to take care of her.]

“Ok, let’s go then.”

A delightful smile appeared on Xiao Mengying as she led Jiang Chen to the company’s parking lot. Luxury vehicles were parked here for valuable customers.

She gestured Jiang Chen to sit in the back of the car before Xiao Mengying also, in triumphant steps, walked to the other side and elegantly sat inside. The driver in the front started the car and smoothly headed to the road.

A Mercedes-Benz Costumed Version. The back of the seat was very spacious with the front and back of the car divided with a blackboard. The window was also tinted which turned the backseat into a secretive area.

The atmosphere was rather erotic.

Especially when a beauty that sat beside you with her legs crossed looked at you with a dubious smile.

“Mr. Jiang, there’s still 30 minutes before we arrive. Let’s discuss something interesting.”

Jiang Chen noticed the seductive little tongue roll between her parted bright red lips. The pair of charming eyes has been particularly seductive under this intimate atmosphere.

“Oh? For example?” Jiang Chen also smiled.

He heard the implicit rules within the real estate sales industry. To get a higher commission they would provide special service to big customers, but he didn't expect to encounter it.

“For example, if you choose to pay the full amount, I'll bring a little surprise for you.” The curvature of Xiao Mengying's mouth was teasing Jiang Chen.

“Oh? Then this is something to look forward to. If you can make me satisfied, then I'll consider paying a guarantee fee. If I am happy with the mansion, then, of course, it is okay to pay the full amount.” Jiang Chen's lips also began to curve upwards as desire began to show through his eyes.

He never said he was a courteous gentleman. Since the hint was so obvious, why would he say no?

Xiao Mengying's eyes lit up as she processed Jiang Chen's words. Guarantee fee would equate to strong intention in purchasing the mansion. It would be up to her efforts to convince the customer to make the final decision.

“Jiang Chen's a man of his words right?” Xiao Mengying teased as her beautiful eyes cast downwards and she left her seat.

Jiang Chen finally knew why the design was so spacious. Xiao Mengying knelt in front of him as she seductively looked at him.

She opened a compartment from under his seat and took out something small.

“To welcome your sir, I’ll help you, sir, to clean up a little?”

He didn’t expect her to be this straight forward.

Xiao Mengying used her fingers to opened Jiang Chen’s belt and gently loosen it before she unzipped a particular area.

“How are you going to clean it up for me?” Jiang Chen reacted to Xiao Mengying’s hands’ movement as he raised his eyebrow.

“Like this.” Xiao Mengying laughed teasing him. She took out a wet wipe and surrounded Jiang Chen’s private area with both of her hands.

It was a cold and soft sensation. The coldness came from the wet wipe, the softness came from the delicate hands of the beauty.

“Just like this?” Jiang Chen asked dubiously.

She smiled as she put her face closer. She looked up charmingly and tastefully licked her red lips with her playful tongue.

“And like this.”

The hot breath, the warm and wet sensation, Jiang Chen felt that he was surrounded by moistness and warmth.

Xiao Mengying was satisfied with Jiang Chen's expression. With her eyes narrowed, she began to savor the delicious treat in her mouth. Lick, suck, and bite, with all her ability.

Not only her skillfulness in eating ice cream, but Xiao Mengying's face of enjoyment also made Jiang Chen's scalp tingle. Even if he knew it was acting, who could last through a beauty's intoxicated expression?

The scenery outside the window flew past as the presence of pedestrians and cars made both of them even feel more excited. Especially when it was not possible to see from the outside, but everything was so clear from the inside.

Fast and furious?

At the peak of climax, Jiang Chen held onto Xiao Mengying's head as he forcefully spilled his ice cream into her mouth, followed by her painful gulping sounds.

## Chapter 59: Luxury

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The luxury car stopped in front of the community as the driver rolled the window down to scan the identification card before the bar slowly lifted up. Peering through the window, Jiang Chen noticed that all of the security staff were muscular and fit, equipped with electric rods. Although he didn't know the specifics of their ability, from the way they stood, he guessed that they must be retired soldiers.

His suspicions were correct; the fifty security guards within the community were all elite soldiers who retired without any infractions. The property management's high reputation was certainly justified.

Since the community's opening six years ago, many thieves set their eyes upon the property, but none were successful. The security team's scouting skills had been honed in the army. If thieves managed to bypass them on their watch, then they might as well reconsider their career as a special agent.

The luxury car drove smoothly into the wide driveway in the deepest part of the community which was shaped like a flipped bowl on top of a large, artificially-created hill. Jiang Chen's mansion was at the highest point of the bowl, overlooking the beautiful river scenery.

“The people living here are either rich or respective. This way, not only will you get to enjoy the complex, but you'll also meet a lot of interesting neighbors.”



Xiao Mengying was hinting that staying here would be beneficial for his career.

However, Jiang Chen didn't seem to receive her intentions as he flashed a smile at her carelessly. Career was one thing, but the living standard was more important. Without it, what was the point of having a high net worth?

Since he purchased the mansion for his own enjoyment, the first priority was comfort. As for the rich and respectable neighbors? He had a feeling that they would come knocking soon enough.

The car came to a smooth stop in front of the mansion door as Xiao Mengying quickly got out and opened the door for Jiang Chen. She scanned her card on the door, making the metal gate automatically slide open.

“Once registration is complete, the mansion's security system will update. You can even use the app our company developed to open the door. Of course, I recommend the special electronic key.” Xiao Mengying smartly batted her eyelashes at him as she led the way into the mansion.

Behind the European-themed wall was another world.

The clean-cut grass field, straight stone-brick pathway, and the building that was a fusion between classical European and modern simplicity came together flawlessly without any contradiction to the two unique themes. The open French windows adorned the first floor of the mansion, completed by white, square blocks

around the rest of the building. Elegant but open, the four-story building stood out among the other three-story mansions.

Jiang Chen was most satisfied with the oval-shaped swimming pool. Just as the document stated, with a press of a button, the dome retracted to the side, revealing an open swimming pool. The temperature of the pool could also be accurately increased to a specific range thanks to the heating equipment underneath the pool. Although these innovative designs were rather impractical, it fueled someone like Jiang Chen who thrived on the “coolness.”

Xiao Mengying explained the high-end features within the mansion and led him inside.

The interior design pleased him even further.

Sample rooms were furnished for the sake of advertisement, and the company offered the option of refurbishing if the homebuyer was unhappy with the design.

But Jiang Chen was plenty satisfied with the decorations. The monochromatic living room was comforting, and the artistic furniture further enhanced the lively feel. The building itself had been built to perfection by a world-renowned architect. Even without knowing why it felt so right, Jiang Chen felt at peace here.

The dining room and kitchen were masterfully designed as well.

Xiao Mengying led him up the stairs to the second floor which

had been designed purely for comfort.

The floor was mostly made up of bedrooms, but what shocked Jiang Chen was that every room was designed slightly differently. The intent was to allow the homebuyer to freely select a room based on their mood. One of the rooms was monochromatic with an emphasis on simplicity, while another was decorated with warm-tones to create an intimate atmosphere.

The third and fourth-floor flowed smoothly with the rest of the building's design. Each floor had washrooms and two extra bedrooms. There were also some empty rooms that could be converted into whatever the homebuyer wished, such as an office or a gym.

He stood on the top floor balcony and gazed out at the beautiful scenery in the light river breeze. Although it was still the middle of summer, the wind was slightly cool which could perhaps be attributed to the vegetation around the area; it was vastly different from the heat in the center of Wanghai City.

“Not bad. This is a great place to live.” Jiang Chen nodded at Xiao Mengying with a satisfied expression.

The green vegetation, elegant environment, luxury, and comfortable design were more than worth the price.

It was certainly more “modern” than the mansion in the apocalypse world that had been designed with a retro feel—it was the perfect environment for enjoying life.

And all for only two hundred million RMB.

Maybe because money came too easily for him, it was an obvious choice for Jiang Chen.

“Although our company cannot provide a discount on these types of mansions, based on the agreement we signed with Maybach, we’ll provide a brand new Maybach S600 for any home with a pricetag of one hundred million or above. This is a limited edition vehicle,” Xiao Mengying explained.

Jiang Chen had heard about the Maybach S600 before. The price overseas was around half a million USD, which was around three million RMB. Of course, people who owned one hundred million mansions would not lack this small amount of money, but it was a good gesture, and a gift seemed more natural rather than giving a discount as part of a sales strategy.

## Chapter 60: House Hunting

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Jiang Chen wrote the word “Jiang” on the contract, then raised his eyebrows mischievously as he dropped the pen. He smirked at Xiao Mengying’s eager look.

“If I haven’t tried before, how will I know if it is actually good?”

Xiao Mengying smiled charmingly, naturally understanding his meaning.

“Which room does Mr. Jiang want to sample?”

“Whichever one Miss Sales Manager recommends.”

“Hehe, of course, words won’t allow the gentleman to experience the design philosophy of the mansion. Please allow me to help you understand.” Xiao Mengying smiled teasingly at him as she turned around and walked towards the stairs with elegant strides.

The smooth curvature of her butt and body heated Jiang Chen’s blood.

Although it was a new mansion, everything was already included... such as the bedsheets.

The bedroom door was slammed shut.

Xiao Mengying was prepared and did not resist Jiang Chen's invasive moves. Her leg curled around Jiang Chen's waist as both of her arms came up to surround his neck before she passionately kissed him.

Jiang Chen, of course, was delighted to accept Xiao Mengying's steamy invitation. He opened his mouth to let the small tongue twist and attack his own. Gripping the firm, attractive leg, he easily lifted Xiao Mengying with his 25 muscle strength. He pressed her up against the window, inducing a surprised yelp from her.

"People are going to see." Xiao Mengying said coquettishly as she gazed at him with pleading eyes. Despite her words, it was already wet where it mattered, and she didn't try to stop Jiang Chen. Instead, she lifted her gorgeous butt to fit Jiang Chen's positioning.

[Says no, but the body is truthful.]

Jiang Chen smirked as he pushed his ice cream inside.

With a mansion like this, it was impossible to see inside, since privacy was an important aspect of the design. The green vegetation surrounding the mansions made peeking impossible.

Xiao Mengying bit her soft, red lips as she willingly accepted Jiang Chen's furious acts. She twisted her body to match Jiang Chen's rhythm with eyes that gazed at Jiang Chen with tenderness and passion leaking out.

Since it was a transaction, Jiang Chen didn't need to concern himself with the girl's perspective; he freely went at his own pace to seek enjoyment. The monstrous thrusting motions did bring joy to Xiao Mengying, but after an hour, the pace became painful.

[Is it still not over...?]

Xiao Mengying pleaded with Jiang Chen with her eyes, but he did not slow down in the slightest.

"Can you not take it anymore?" Jiang Chen adjusted his position to whisper into her ear.

"Mhmm!" Xiao Mengying nodded, trying to gain his sympathy.

"Do you want to get someone else then?" An evil smirk appeared on his face, and he belatedly realized that he was starting to act like Sun Jiao.

Xiao Mengying immediately shook her head and threw away her pitiful act. Her delicate waist began to respond again to the thrusting motion.

A two hundred million deal! This meant the commission alone was at least one million, which was her salary for the entire year! It was also difficult to sell these types of furnished mansions; if she succeeded, it would prove her competence.

The majority of real estate sales struggled to break the ten

million mark, but this single deal was worth two hundred million! It would advance her career, and if she could enter management, she wouldn't have to worry about her youth.

[I don't care anymore.]

She “dreadfully” closed her eyes as she tried to respond to Jiang Chen's every action.

Money was not easy to make. Even a night with a celebrity was not worth millions. Either way, this deal was worth it to her. Her legs began to feel fragile and she felt as though she would be torn apart, but if she failed to satisfy Jiang Chen, all of her effort would go down the drain.

If she wasn't willing to bear the “pain,” there were plenty of others who would take it for her. Despite her colleagues' haughty attitudes, they were no doubt eyeing her sales manager position.

Results ruled at Wanhua Real Estate; whoever had the better sales record was the better fit for the sales manager position. The newcomer Fang Yuanyuan was no different in that she was willing to do anything. Xiao Mengying heard from an acquaintance that this girl participated in a party with the young master of a gang to sell a house and played with five people.

Who knew what this girl was thinking or what sort of emotions she had coming in to work. But she managed to sell the house worth ten million, successfully completing the sales requirement for the first year to continue working at headquarters.



Compared to her, at least this is a lot easier.

Xiao Mengying comforted herself, slightly frowned, and let Jiang Chen...

—

By the time they returned to the car, it was already dusk. The driver stood smoking beside the car, but when he saw the VIP and his boss come out, he immediately extinguished the cigarette butt before opening the door for him with a courteous smile and bow.

Being in the industry for so long, he knew what happened in that mansion between the sales manager and Jiang Chen, but it was not up to an ordinary person like him to judge. It was better to keep his mouth shut. The real estate industry was not clean to begin with, especially for a major player like Wanhua Real Estate.

Jiang Chen got into the car first before Xiao Mengying elegantly sat beside him. The driver started the engine and returned on the same route.

In the car, Xiao Mengying called her manager, and when they arrived, he waited in front of the door with the sales staff to welcome them. Although Xiao Mengying was similarly a manager in name, her position of sales manager had been specifically made to motivate the staff. In terms of pay, the salary was the same as any other manager's, but in terms of responsibilities, they were no different from those of the regular sales staff.

As for the General Manager, that was another role entirely. He managed everything at headquarters from strategy to operations. Any deal over thirty million had to be completed by him, but of course, he didn't receive commission as his bonus was based on the total sales around this area.

Jiang Chen took the gold-gilded business card from the reverent General Manager and enjoyed the warm welcome from the sales staff that were lined up. His vanity was fulfilled as he happily entered the office together with the General Manager.

# Chapter 61: Extravagant Spending

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When Xiao Mengying saw that Jiang Chen paid the two hundred forty million in full, her eyes lit up and she felt the pain was worth it, especially when the General Manager secretly sent her a thumbs-up.

“I’m certainly pleased with the house, but I was more pleased with your sales manager.” Jiang Chen smiled and shook hands with the General Manager after signing the necessary documents.

The General Manager responded by laughing with a look that all men understood as he passed the proof of ownership and the electronic key to Jiang Chen. He also promised that within three days, Jiang Chen could move in.

The mansion was technically available right away, but in order to ensure the highest level of customer satisfaction, Wanhua Real Estate conducted a complimentary cleaning and inspection. Since it was a new estate without any previous owners, it needed a dusting at the very least. Compared to the trail of zeros in two hundred forty million, the cost of cleaning was inconsequential.

The tedious process was completed in a relatively short amount of time. Pleased with the General Manager’s work, Jiang praised him before he leaving the luxurious Wanhua Real Estate headquarters.

On his way out, he glanced at the still-stunned Fang Yuanyuan with a playful smile and a wave of his contract and keys. Xiao

Mengying followed him with a meaningful smile, licking her lips ambitiously.

In recognition of her work, the General Manager commended her sales record which meant that she would soon be promoted.

But compared to the million dollar commission, she was more interesting in the owner of that mansion—rich and handsome, and also single. As for Xia Shiyu? She was nothing to worry about.

In terms of techniques, it was impossible for that virgin to please him like she could. She was confident that with her intoxicating body, she would be able to attract him. All she needed to do now was bide her time and call him at the number she secretly memorized.

She firmly believed that with the proper bait, no man would be able to resist biting.

Of course, these were all her own speculations.

Although Jiang Chen was never a nice guy to begin with, he still maintained balance in his heart.

When Xiao Mengying walked out of the office, her colleagues surrounded her and rapidly questioned her about the man who was personally greeted by the General Manager.

“Be truthful! What trick did you use to dig up that rich man?” A

saleswoman with a gorgeous body pushed her way to Xiao Mengying's side.

“No, no, it was just a regular deal,” Xiao Mengying modestly replied, but with her vanity secretly fulfilled.

“You have that smell on you, hehe, you can't escape my nose.” A cute-looking girl sniffed Xiao Mengying's face with a grin.

After some back-and-forth teasing, Xiao Mengying finally and “unwillingly” revealed her experience.

When they heard about the two hundred forty million deal, the sales staff gasped without exception. Xiao Mengying even hinted that the man did not even blink when paying the full amount, making them even more hysterical.

“Mengying, you are the best. You must know that man's phone number, right? Hurry up and tell me,” a curly-haired girl asked pleadingly, holding onto her arm.

“Yes, yes, sharing is caring.”

Inside, she was ecstatic, enjoying the flattery of her colleagues, but outwardly, she maintained her composure.

[You bi\*ches, I know exactly what you're all thinking.]

Even the girl who acted innocent and pure with her adorable face scared Xiao Mengying with her acts in bed. How did she conclude that? From her sales record that remained in the top three.

The other saleswomen all had their own plans. A two hundred forty million deal solidified Xiao Mengying's position as first in the department, and since it was unlikely to be shaken, it would be wise to flatter her. Then in the future, she would be kinder to all of them.

Intoxicated by their flattery, she waved her hand gallantly and promised to treat everyone out tonight, sparking loud cheers. The commission alone was two million, so of course she didn't lack the money.

The girls all had a common purpose, however, which was to hook up with the rich and handsome man. No one wanted to be a real estate saleswoman for the rest of their lives, especially with the short life of the career. The only thing they could do now was earn money but more importantly, find a rich man. And although Xiao Mengying had her advantages, the girls also had their own competitive edge.

The curly-haired girl, for example, although not a virgin, won with her age. As a recent graduate, she had less experience with the rules of the business. If she cried and emphasized her innocence in how she accidentally lost her first time, it would make for a compelling story.

The key was in obtaining the phone number. They all secretly planned on getting her drunk to make her loosen up.

Xiao Mengying, who was basking in the praise, noticed Fang Yuanyuan standing at the front counter.

[You are not trying to flatter me?] Xiao Mengying frowned, then smiled mockingly when she remembered that this new girl had a conflict with Jiang Chen.

“I really don’t have Mr. Jiang’s number. An important person like him would never like me,” Xiao Mengying said with faked sadness. Then her eyes seemed to coincidentally come across Fang Yuanyuan, and as if recalling something of utmost importance, she joyfully asked, “Oh! I remember, Fang Yuanyuan was Mr. Jiang’s classmate. Why don’t we ask her?”

All of the girls paused, then began to laugh.

Fang Yuanyuan’s face had gloom written all over it, hearing the mockery in their laughter as if they were saying, “You bit\*h, you went to the five-people party which just barely allowed you to become a sales girl, but when a piece of meat was fed to your mouth, you ended up giving it to someone else.”

“I, I don’t know. I’m not that close with him,” Fang Yuanyuan stuttered. It was a lie as well, since she had almost gotten together with him in the past.

It was too late now for regrets. If only she had accepted the poor guy from that time...

Ashamed and regretful, she hastily organized her table and left with her bag. Work had already ended anyway, and she needed to run away from her embarrassment.

As for the mockery behind her, she couldn't hear it anymore; it was not her first time experiencing the cruelty of the world.

She didn't question the reason behind these events. Instead, she hated Jiang Chen, the cocky Xiao Mengying, and even resented the expressionless Xia Shiyu who played no part in this.

Her hatred mixed with guilt and regret until it became a poison that gradually overwhelmed her.

Xiao Mengying contently observed Fang Yuanyuan's expression without the slightest guilt or compassion. If that girl had managed to get the deal instead, the sales manager would have been someone else. Then it would be her flattering the girl while getting looked down on.

The workplace was no less cruel than a battlefield, especially one filled with women.

So, she didn't need to have mercy, and no one would feel sympathetic for Fang Yuanyuan.

They would only use the opportunity to prove their loyalty to their invincible boss.



## Chapter 62: Base Construction

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The thoughts of these strangers were of no consequence to Jiang Chen who took a taxi and returned to his hotel.

When Jiang Chen returned, Ayesha, who had been dutifully studying, shyly smiled, transforming her normally expressionless face.

Almost like a newlywed wife.

But the smile made Jiang Chen feel incredibly guilty. Although he hadn't married her yet, he still felt like a cheating husband coming home to a gentle, understanding wife.

[Maybe I should control myself more? There's already too much on my plate.]

He laughed nervously, then brought Ayesha out to a nearby restaurant for a delicious meal free of pork. For this lonely girl, he would always treat her gently. He had his own perverted plans for her once she regained her health.

Yes, indeed.

But becoming intoxicated by many beauties was never a good thing; it was time to head back to the apocalypse he worried about.

That night was quiet, without any conversation.

The next morning, after seeing Ayesha off to her language class, he left a pile of bills beside a note that read <If I don't get back, don't wait for me to eat> before leaving the hotel to travel back to the apocalypse.

—

“You're finally back. Which girl did you sleep with last night?” Sun Jiao crossed her arms and stared at Jiang Chen with a mischievous smile.

Jiang Chen laughed nervously before diverting her attention to the base.

Sun Jiao took a deep breath and began explaining the recent developments to the base. Although she had a naughty nature, she understood the priorities.

First, it was basic infrastructure.

The base's wall had successfully advanced 200 meters in the direction of the underground sewerage, clearing out a plot of land the size of two football fields. The dilapidated wooden mansions in the area were bulldozed, but the foundations could be used right away. The small appliances and furniture were then moved to open ground to see if they could be salvaged or otherwise broken down into usable spare parts.

The chief architect, Lu Huashen, organized the construction teams to build four simple lounges on the existing foundations. Each simplistic lounge was made to fit thirty people since Jiang Chen planned on increasing the population size in the future.

They had completed the first one while the other three were still being constructed.

Additionally, three-story towers of reinforced concrete were built at the corners of the base. Two were in the backyard behind the mansion while the other two stood in the newly cleared-out land. The watchtowers were equipped with light machinery and covered with a layer of camouflage, each manned by one person.

Because of the remote location, the zombies were not as much of a threat as the more dangerous mutants appeared within the city limits around Sixth Street. Instead, the Fishbone survival camp was more concerned about defending against malicious survivors. Upon seeing the high walls and machine guns, however, most of the survivors would be deterred from carrying out their plans.

Two months later, this place would be equipped with the four Sentinel machine guns that he had ordered from Zhao Chenwu's military plant at the price of 300 crystals each. The machine guns were laser-guided and heat-detecting; such handmade, high-tech equipment often cost a fortune because the parts could only be recycled from junks or modified from other gadgets, making them a rare commodity.

Besides constructing defensive equipment, Lu Huashen followed Jiang Chen's orders to build a simple community center in the center of the new plot of land.

Currently, building served as the cafeteria and conference room with only one floor, although the plan was to ultimately have three stories.

It was fortunate that the automatic water treatment system in Wanghai City eliminated concerns of drinking water. The city's water supply system easily connected to the polyethylene pipe, and as long as there were no accidents, the artificial intelligence at the treatment plant would keep it functional.

In terms of power generation, the electrician not only improved the solar panel Sun Jiao had set up but also installed an additional layer of solar panels on the roof; the base could now generate 30 kilowatts of energy per hour.

With proper conservation, this was more than enough to sustain them. The extra electricity was then stored in a K1 battery the size of an oil barrel to provide power for the cold storage.

As for the food Jiang Chen brought back, Sun Jiao had to order Lu Huashen to construct two large warehouses in the backyard because the quantity was so substantial.

The warehouses were designed to have two levels; the first level stored non-perishable food, and beneath it, a basement was dug out to create an insulated space to store perishables. The space was

equipped with the refrigeration system purchased from the Zhao Corporation back in early August. It made the entire basement become a glacial land, forcing them to wear several thick layers before entering. This was where the majority of the power was consumed—in maintaining the refrigeration systems of the two warehouses.

After listening to Sun Jiao's report, Jiang Chen paused, then asked the foremost concern on his mind, "How's the trade with the Zhao Corporation?"

"The trade amount since early August amounts to ten thousand crystals, which is similar to the last trade. The exchanged supplies were all critical supplies that the base needed. For example, the refrigeration system, the battery, and other equipment, as well as firearms and construction materials. After the trades, there was a surplus of 2310 crystals." Sun Jiao took out a tablet and pulled up the ledger, explaining each item thoroughly.

Jiang Chen was shocked, discovering for the first time that she could act like a housekeeper. A smile crept onto his face; he previously thought this audacious girl only knew how to fight, but she also had a detailed side.

"Good, don't save on base construction. Use all of the crystals that you can—that's the best use for it right now. At the current stage, we don't need them as an energy source; we need the necessary construction materials and equipment, as well as lifesaving weaponry!" Jiang Chen nodded as he praised her for her work.

Currently, his public image was as the representative of the Fishbone Food Corporation on a mission to establish a supply station. If he continued to buy construction materials without it, Zhao Chenwu would have grown wary.

If all he said was that he had a trade route with an out-of-province survival base, it made sense to purchase materials locally that would be difficult to transport from faraway. Yet with continuous concrete and steel purchases and construction of walls and houses, it became suspicious.

If a corporation was truly headquartered in another province, some profit had to be transported back, right? If he couldn't find such an excuse, it would have been difficult to pull this lie through. The trade surplus had to be continuously increased to create the facade that profits were continuously being increased for the headquarters. This way, since the agreement with Zhao Chenwu was based on an inherent lie, it was important to make the lie look as realistic as possible.

Sun Jiao became more cheerful after hearing his praise. She continued, "Another thing is that a survival group nearby had noticed us and attempted to contact us."

"Survival group?" Jiang Chen frowned.

"Yes, but they're different from large survival camps like the Sixth Street. Due to the relatively less dangerous environment and fewer damages sustained by their buildings, it only takes a few survivors to create an ample survival space. In the area around our base, there is a total of fifty-seven survival groups, with the

smallest comprised of two families and the largest with twenty or thirty family units. Of course, this is only a rough estimation.”

“This many?” Jiang Chen looked at red dots marked on the tablet, his frown even more pronounced.

Survivor groups...

If possible, he didn't want to engage them yet. At least before the base was equipped with a sufficient amount of combat power, it would be dangerous to contact these people.

With the prodigious supplies he possessed, he had to be cautious, especially with strangers. In the apocalypse, there was no law; a piece of bread could trigger a murder, his base even more so with its ample food resources.

Although the Zhao Corporation would not target Jiang Chen, that was because the president assumed it to be a supply station with the food coming all the way from the Fishbone Food Corporation thousands of miles away. If the ruthless Zhao Chenwu discovered that Jiang Chen was magically creating the food all along, the story would be vastly different.

Different from Zhao Chenwu, the typical survivor would never understand the concept of not killing the egg-laying chicken. If they knew there was food that could last them for years in this place, they would immediately arm up and begin hostile attacks. While the survival groups acted harmoniously most of the time, even going so far as to occasionally contact the neighboring camps,

once the topic of food and survival was broached, the deception would be torn down. And without any strength to defend, they would face an endless number of raids.

The good news was that the survival groups all had similar bullet weapons, lacking any power armors, tanks, or anything more technologically advanced. Thus, they contacted them without showing any signs of aggression.

The survival groups were also uncertain of why these individuals had suddenly built a massive base here; essentially, they were guarding against the “odd neighbor” that had come out of nowhere.

Following this, Sun Jiao enforced a number of measures to protect the safety of the base.

For example, food and fire usage were strictly prohibited outside of the cafeteria. All windows had to be shut when eating; this was to prevent spies from knowing about the existence of their food storage.

At the same time, Sun Jiao clearly rejected survivors who requested entrance to the base.

And as for what stance to take towards the groups who contacted them? Everything was waiting for Jiang Chen’s return to be determined.



# Chapter 63: Virtual Reality Training Chamber

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“You handled these issues perfectly.” After listening to Sun Jiao’s report, Jiang Chen nodded and contemplated for a minute.

“How’s the base’s combat ability?”

“Almost everyone can fight with a gun,” Sun Jiao said proudly.

“Already?” Jiang Chen was astounded.

“We purchased eight virtual reality training chambers from the Zhao Corporation. I believe they said that the PAC used this to train civil soldiers. It’s fairly common at the Sixth Street where they have some stockpiled in their storage. After hearing that we didn’t have any, they sold it to us at a discounted price.”

“Take me there to have a look!” Jiang Chen was extremely interested and curious to understand the virtual reality training chamber’s functions. If possible, he wanted to bring one and use it as a first-person shooter simulation to practice his combat ability.

Sun Jiao smiled at Jiang Chen’s excitement as she led him to the community center.

The training chamber was designed with futuristic designs and fluidity. Jiang Chen touched the smooth surface, unable to contain

the thrill.

Sun Jiao began to explain, “This model was produced in 2140 as one of the early models of the virtual reality training chamber. Despite that, its functionalities match those of the later civilian educational models. Deep submergence into the training chamber allows human memory to operate at peak performance and also enables the bodies to perfectly synchronize with the learned motions.

“Because death in training is just a game over, many high-risk training activities can be completed in virtual reality. Although obviously, the physical body still has to be conditioned in the real world.”

“Physical conditioning can be solved through the genetic vaccine.” Jiang Chen nodded, pleased with the explanation.

“Right. That’s why I included 50 D-Level genetic vaccines in the purchase order. All of them were injected, allowing the base’s combat power to become slightly stronger.”

Jiang Chen and Sun Jiao were both injected with the C-Level genetic vaccine, but due to their scarcity, an order of 10 was reasonable, but 50 was not. Since the vaccine was not commonly purchased, it was not produced in large quantities, so she decided to purchase the relatively cheaper, lower-grade D-level genetic vaccine.

The only difference between the C-Level and D-Level was a five-

point stat difference, but it didn't limit the body's potential; usually, even an E-Level was more than enough.

For example, the majority of the civil soldiers stationed in the outer circle of the Sixth Street were injected with E-level genetic vaccines; some only had the anti-virus vaccination since the possibility of close-range combat these days was nearly zero.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen had an idea.

“Is it possible to use this thing to study something else, like a language?”

It would be useful in teaching Ayesha. Combined with the genetic vaccine, he could train a beautiful bodyguard and driver.

The loyalty of Ayesha was definitely not a concern, but Yao Yao could change the training program's weapon level to 150 years ago to solve any inconsistencies.

Sun Jiao was confused, not understanding Jiang Chen's purpose in asking but still nodded.

“In theory, yes, the training chamber was equipped with a standard studying function since memory operates at its peak in a deep sleep. I learned this growing up in a survival base. But studying languages...is this useful?”

Survival base 071's education system was mostly based around

virtual reality training chambers' high efficiency and ease of use.

But as for studying languages, even most of the foreigners left behind in Wanghai City had learned Chinese already.

"It'll be somewhat useful. I'm planning on bringing one back." Jiang Chen nodded, not bothering to hide his actions as he stored the training chamber into the storage dimension. He would give it to Yao Yao to adjust. He also took a few of the remaining genetic vaccines with a specific purpose in mind.

Aware of his secret, Sun Jiao was no longer shocked by the "magic", but she conscientiously swiveled her head to make sure that no one else saw.

"The training chambers are powered by crystals, costing around one crystal every ten hours. Although it previously used electricity, after the apocalypse, it became difficult to supply such a significant amount of power that way, so the Sixth Street engineers converted many of the machines into using crystals. After initiating the program, inject an ample amount of nutrient supply. I use a ratio of 10 crystals for 50 kilograms to purchase 4 kilograms worth of ingredients. Add 1 liter of water to 0.5 kilograms of ingredient."

"Mhmm, understand." Jiang Chen scratched his head as he stored the four bags of ingredients into the storage dimension.

While each bag was only the size of a pillow, the density of the particle-like ingredient was extremely high, making the four bags weigh an astounding one ton.

Then, he changed the topic to external affairs of the base.

“If the thirty survivors in the base have already completed military training and can protect the base, then why don’t we start the next step?”

“Oh?” Sun Jiao was drawn into the conversation and waited for Jiang Chen’s directions on their future path.

“Establish a temporary trading station in front of the base and sell compressed crackers to the survival groups, and also allow for the exchange of crystals.” He smirked. It was time to get the survival groups involved now.

“Hmm? But exchange for what?” Sun Jiao didn’t quite understand.

“Electronic parts and construction materials—as long as the base has a use for it. It’s not too difficult to find these items in wreckages, so go ahead and price according to the Sixth Street standard. We don’t have to care how much we earn as long as those people work for us. Once they grow to depend on us, and their weapons can’t pose a threat to us, we won’t have to worry about their ill intentions. I believe that after some time passes, some small survivor groups will want to join us.”

Small, independent groups had no need to trust each other and would pose no threat of banding together into an alliance against the Fishbone base in the future. If they had the ability to gather in

the first place, they would never have been suppressed by mutants, zombies, and bandits to this extent. Instead, they would have developed into a massive force like the Sixth Street.

The goal of most survival groups was survival, and their desire to expand and attack were much smaller compared to large organizations.

“But these people are difficult to control,” Sun Jiao said, unsettled.

These survivors were different from the slaves on the base; they had no slavery microchips.

“That won’t be a problem,” Jiang Chen smiled, “as long as we promote the people with absolute loyalty to management positions. They are the ‘heroes’ for building the base, so we can’t let them remain as workers.

“Of course, this is only a strategy. For now, we can’t allow them to enter the base. All trade must be made at the front gate, and every once in a while, cease the trade to create the illusion that we don’t have many supplies.”

Sun Jiao immediately understood what Jiang Chen meant.

The thirty people would gradually assimilate with the foreigners.

“Also, next time, order another group of refugees. Before we

accept anyone from the outside, we need to expand our population base. Let's set it to sixty people, and compensate Zhao Chenwu with 30 crystals. We can't always ask him to be the kind person, so we'll give him some benefits in the people trading business," Jiang Chen added.

The last time, Zhao Chenwu did them a favor and provided Jiang Chen the people at no cost, but it was too stingy to expect the same again. The business relationship had to bring mutual benefits in order to establish a healthy relationship. And if Zhao Chenwu continued to sell people relying on his political power, he risked impeachment.

If one group of slaves could bring him at least 10 crystals of profit, he would be very interested.

"Hehe, looks like you haven't forgotten about all of the matters here. I apologize for blaming you." Sun Jiao saw that all of the important matters were taken of and returned to her usual audacious, naughty tone. She approached Jiang Chen and played with his hair.

"Ahem, of course, this is my home in this world."

# Chapter 64: Basic Artificial Intelligence

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When Jiang Chen and the flushing red Sun Jiao left the training room one after the other, it was already noon. He brought Sun Jiao back into the mansion as he saw Yao Yao who he hasn't seen in awhile.

This tech genius stayed in her room everyone to study the highly advanced computer theory which made her already pale skin even whiter.

But this little loli did grow compared to when they first met, the previous small dimple now required a bra. The boney face without much fat now appeared more rounded which made her look even more adorable.

Yao Yao was obviously excited to see Jiang Chen as she was no longer her conservative self and directly dived into Jiang Chen's hug.

To be frank, he hasn't been back in a while. He admits that he had too much fun in the other world.

Yao Yao who spent every day and night thinking about the "nice big brother" gently pressed her face against his chest, she smiled and rubbed her head.

Watching Yao Yao's adorable look, a smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face as he lightly touched her wavy hair.



Don't be mistaken, he really was not into loli, the purity of her smile just made everything feel natural

As long as he hugged her, his stress and anger faded away.

However, they ignored Sun Jiao standing beside them.

The possessive Sun Jiao gave both of them a dirty which made Yao Yao jumped away, not knowing what to do. Though Sun Jiao has always been nice to her, she was always afraid of this "sister" of hers, perhaps because the first impression being too "violent"?

Especially after witnessing the embarrassing scene in the living room.

Jiang Chen rolled his eyes displeased as he sat down on the kitchen table as he started to enjoy lunch with the two girls.

Juicy potato with fried meat, garlic eggplant, delicious seaweed egg soup, even with the unhealthy ray of sunlight piercing through the window, it's hard to imagine that such delicacies could be born on this radiation filled wasteland.

This meal was the masterpiece of Yao Yao as Miss Sun Jiao only ate, never cooked.

After trying Yao Yao's cooking, Jiang Chen gave her a raise of

thumb. This turned her pale face blushing again.

But this somehow provoked Miss Sun Jiao as she jealously kicked Jiang Chen under the table as she looked him displeased. Jiang Chen had to also raise his thumb, to praise her ability to eat...

Of course, he will never let her know that.

After receiving Jiang Chen's recognition, Sun Jiao returned to normal as she happily enjoyed the meal.

[So bothersome, such a child.] Jiang Chen mocked in his mind but in his eyes, it was more affection than trouble.

—

After lunch, Jiang Chen returned to the technology department at the community center and found Du Yongkang that was busily working in front of the computer. The technology department was only a room 30 square meter large, and most of the space was crowded with equipment that he either bought or created.

Jiang Chen gave a budget of maximum 1000 crystals a month for this department, but Du Yongkang instead saved a lot of money for Jiang Chen. Except for a few pieces of critical equipment, he managed to produce most of the equipment he needed.

There were two phones on the table, a Huawei and an iPhone 5 that's both connected to an oddly shaped computer.

Du Yongkang had his eyes locked on the computer screen as he confirmed the code line by line. His finger typed furiously on the control panel as he completely disregarded the presence of Jiang Chen.

Seeing that he was working so hard, Jiang Chen was also happy, but he didn't have the time to wait.

"Ahem." Jiang Chen lightly coughed to acknowledge his presence.

Hearing Jiang Chen's voice, Du Yongkang first paused before he turned around in joy.

"Boss, you are finally here. I already asked Miss Sun multiple times, but she insisted for me to recheck my program before showing you. But I really can't find any more flaws." Du Yongkang cried to Jiang Chen about his remorse.

"Ahem, I am usually busy and sometimes not at the base. How is it going, did you finish the task I have assigned you?"

[How could I let you know my whereabouts?] Jiang Chen casually changed the conversation topic.

Seeing that Jiang Chen cut straight to the topic, Du Yongkang also cleverly turned on his professional attitude. He typed a few commands on the screen as he disconnected the phone and handed

to Jiang Chen.

“Boss, rather than me explaining, why don’t you take a look yourself. I can promise you, anyone using this operating system will master its functions the first time!”

Could it be this magical?

Jiang Chen with skepticism took over the Huawei phone as he pressed the on button.

The triangle based triangular prism formed the logo of Future Technology, the description below said <Future 1.0>

[Future 1.0? That’s a creative name.]

The attention drawing, eye catching start menu alone was superb. The futuristic looking simple design philosophy combined with sophisticated looking icons perfected meshed together. The framerate was also the exception as it did not lag despite all the special effects.

Immediately, an egg shaped robot caught the attention of Jiang Chen.

“Where’s the home page?” Jiang Chen was confused.

Before Du Yongkang responded, the egg shaped cute robot

already gave him the answer.

“Hi, valued user, I am your most loyal assistant – Little White. Of course, if you don’t like this name, you can also change the name for me.”

The lively looking Robot did look adorable. A curve appeared on Jiang Chen’s mouth as he continued to listen to the explanation.

“If you need to call out the menu, you can just tell me. Or, you can touch my belly to achieve this function.” Little White blinked its eyes as he patted his belly.

Jiang Chen poked his stomach as the egg like Robot suddenly jumped up and brought down a blind from the top of the screen. On the blind was a list of applications.

“If you need to open an app, selecting through the menu is an option, but I recommend master to directly tell me.”

Little White hid in the bottom left corner of the screen as he said while blinking.

“Ahem, if you think he is annoying, you can also open text mode by telling him.” Du Yongkang added. It was clear he is proud of his work.

“No, this is interesting. But in the circumstance where volume should be limited, text mode will be useful.” Jiang Chen nodded as

he said to Little White, “open map.”

“Yes, master.”

As soon as his voice died, the map appeared on the computer screen. But because there was no signal in this world, the map focused on Wanghai City.

“Is there any game?” Jiang Chen said under his breath, but the little guy managed to pick it up.

“Sorry master, this is no downloaded game on the phone. But if you want, you only need to tell the type of game you like, and I can search it on the internet for you.” Little White sounded like he did something wrong.

Jiang Chen was absolutely stunned, there’s even this function?

“Little White could complete actions for users. This includes opening searching engine, entering keywords, scan through results. Also, if you connect the phone to this server, there’s the downloaded backup file from the internet from the year 2017 to 2027. It seems like the data in this period is most compatible with this thing called phone. You can give it a try.” Du Yongkang passed the connection over. Because there was no internet, he could only simulate a web environment to achieve this function.

Jiang Chen connected the phone to the server and then spoke to Little White.

“Find me a racing game that can operate on this fun with the best visual.”

“Ok master, I think this <Fast and Furious 17> will match your taste. The game description and download link are prepared for you. Are you happy with the result?” Less than a second later, Little White carried a few screenshots in front of Jiang Chen as he blinked his eyes looking for praise.

[Damn, that’s fast! This visual graphics, could this normal Huawei really handle this?] Jiang Chen hesitated for a moment before he said.

“Download.”

“Yes! Master.”

Because it was directly connected to the server, so the data transfer speed was tremendously fast. Jiang Chen couldn’t wait for Little White to open the game, then immediately stunned by the graphic.

The real dust like particle effects, the movie like halo, the cinematic like cut scenes. The game’s quality was excellent to the point that Jiang Chen didn’t even want to comment, he only wanted to express his shocking realization that a Huawei phone could run this?

The not yet debuted iPhone 7 probably wouldn't even be able to handle this.

"Don't look at me like that, I really didn't change the hardware of this." Du Yongkang saw that Jiang Chen looked at him with suspicious as he waved his hands to defend himself. Although he didn't why his boss was determined on this "ancient" product, he must have his own thought process, so he didn't dare to defy him.

"Excellent, I am pleased." Jiang Chen nodded with a smile. At this point, he could pretty announce the end of an era between iOS and Android. The Future 1.0 operating system would no doubt dominate the phone industry.

Of course, this has to be done step by step.

First, enter as software, once it accumulates enough user base and dependency, recommend the user to uninstall the original system to save memory. The Future 1.0 can replace the existing operating system and will not affect the phone's operation.

It would be up to Du Yongkang to implement this.

"That's not all, boss, take a look at this." Du Yongkang saw that the boss was happy as he then began to show off the other functions of the phone. He touched the tablet with his finger.

"This is?" Jiang Chen uncomprehendingly looked at the data stream on the tablet.



“A simulation of an attack.” Du Yongkang smiled as he signaled Jiang Chen to look at Little White on the screen.

“Master, I detected malicious malware attack!” Suddenly Little White turned into a full armed egg with sword and shield as his eyes sharpened. Not long after, before the malware infiltrated the system, it was “picked” up by Little White’s sword and chopped into pieces.

The animation was cute, to say the least.

“The safety level is C, which means that all the attack method between 2000 to 2101 will be useless.” Du Yongkang proudly explained.

“Mhmm, that’s enough.” Jiang Chen agreed.

But the function should be eliminated first if it was introduced with antivirus, he was afraid that 361 (a popular antivirus software) to report Little White as malicious. These people would do that.

Additionally, the extraneous features may hinder the artificial intelligence selling point of the software which makes the user confused. Once Future 1.0 has established itself, the features could be slowly introduced.

“These functions are only the tip of the iceberg. The most important thing is that Little White is a basic artificial

intelligence.” Du Yongkang smiled as he opened his hands, “not only can he detect language, he can also detect your current mood. For example, you are heart broken. Okay, this is only an example. He will comfort you. If you feel happy, he will be happy for you. He’ll remember everything you said and respond in a human function.”

“Isn’t artificial intelligence supposed to be emotionless?” he looked at Little White’s adorable eyes as he asked.

“That’s right, but this is the power of science. Although he won’t really feel happy or sad, he will bring you visual and audio effects that mimic happy or sadness. This is based on psychology and human behavior. To put it in simple words, everything you said is stored in a data base, and based your conversation and an algorithm, Little White will respond according to the situation and history. This is basic artificial intelligence!”

“You wrote this?” Jiang Chen was shocked.

“No way.” Du Yongkang forced a smile, “this is 21 years of work of tens of computer scientists and psychologists. All the latter artificial intelligence is based on that data base. Although intermediary artificial intelligence evolved through this data, because of the <Artificial Intelligence Management Act>, all the research stopped. So the most common version still in the market like Little White that’s still depended on an external data base.

“So you are saying that, if I am chatting with him, I just hear predefined quotes?” Jiang Chen had an odd impression as his face. He used his finger and ticked Little White’s stomach on the screen.

“You can say it like. But I guarantee you that if it wasn’t for me to tell you the secret behind it, you could chat with him for the rest of life and still think he is pet full of emotions, and not lines of code.” Du Yongkang nodded.

Technology is truly a magical thing. He didn’t dive into the issue further

“What about this?” Jiang Chen picked up the iPhone.

“The compatibility is flawless. Although this piece of electronic is also ancient, it is a bit better than the other one. Future 1.0 is perfectly operational on both!”

“Excellent!” Jiang Chen patted Du Yongkang on the shoulder as he waved his hands, “From now I, you’ll be the head of the technology department at Fish Bone Survival Base. You’ll now receive meat can every day.”

Although he didn’t even know what the department exactly was.

“Thank you, boss!” Du Yongkang was so excited that he almost kneeled down. He was almost about to hug Jiang Chen’s leg before Jiang Chen shivered and stepped away.

“Ahem, like I said before, do a great job, and I won’t let you down.”

Then Jiang Chen ordered Du Yongkang to limit some of the functions to meet the actual demand.

The work was quickly completed as the app size was trimmed down.

Under Du Yongkang's sincere gratitude, Jiang Chen proudly retook the USB drive to the mansion. He couldn't wait to go back to the modern world, Future Technology's development needs some adjustment.

With this groundbreaking operating system, or software, for now, he was confident that he would make the name echo not in China, but also around the world!

# Chapter 65: Her Vulnerable Side

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Still at dusk.

Jiang Chen stood in front of Xia Shiyu's door. Just as he was about to ring the bell, he paused his finger in midair.

[Seems like every time I come it is during the night...]

He shook his head and pushed the weird thought out of his head, as he rang the bell.

But after waiting awhile, no one came to open the door.

[The light is on. She should be home. Is she annoyed that I come so late every time?]

Jiang Chen forced a smile. It was nowhere intentional, but the timing just worked out to be this way. He spent the afternoon with Sun Jiao and Yao Yao before coming back to the modern world. After having dinner with them, he brought the USB drive over. Because the office was still being renovated, the employees only consist of Xia Shiyu, so she worked from home.

After pondering in front of the door, Jiang Chen scratched his head. Since he was already here, it wouldn't fit his personality to just go back. He thought about it, before pulling out his phone.

“Call Xia Shiyu’s number.”

“Okay, master.,” the phone immediately called out.

It didn’t take long for Jiang Chen to get used to the clever Little White. He only needed to move his mouth to finish any function on the phone.

The phone rang for around 20 seconds before it finally went through.

“Hello?” A weak and hoarse voice came from the other side.

“Are you okay? Why do you sound so weird?” Jiang Chen quickly asked with a frown.

“Nothing, cough, I just feel a bit tired. Sorry, I fell asleep and didn’t notice your call,” Xia Shiyu touched her burning her forehead as she said with ambiguity.

“I am outside, open the door for me. I’ll bring you to the hospital.” Jiang Chen left no room for argument.

“Why did you come at night again?” Xia Shiyu’s weak voice had a hint of confusion and alertness.

“Of course I needed to talk about some things with you, but let’s not worry about that. I am worried about your condition. Open the

door for me, and stop asking!” Jiang Chen anxiously said.

If she became unconscious, it’s going to be problematic.

After what seemed like a long wait, slow shuffling noises finally resonated on the other side of the door, and the doorknob turned. But when Jiang Chen saw Xia Shiyu, she scared him. Her pale face nowhere resembled the independent woman she was. She looked weak and fragile.

“What’s going on!” Jiang Chen immediately held onto Xia Shiyu who was about to fall.

He hasn't seen her for one day, and she became this sick?

Xia Shiyu bit her lips as she looked at the hand that was holding her. She didn’t want to open the door because she was so “vulnerable”. If Jiang Chen had other motives, there was nothing she could do.

But what she didn’t consider was that if he really had other motives, she would be vulnerable regardless of her condition.

Perhaps it was an impulse, but her perplexed feeling defeated her awareness for self-protection which made her open the door. The moment when she saw Jiang Chen’s face, she suddenly felt calm.

“Fu\*k, it’s burning!” Jiang Chen touched her forehead as the high temperature made him jump, “No, something is definitely

wrong! I'll take you to the hospital.”

“It's too late, I'll eat some medicine and sleep through it.” Although she hated cursing words, she had no energy to ridicule him.

“No! Listen to me,” Jiang Chen rejected her right away. In a state of shock, Jiang Chen picked her up princess carry style and walked downstairs.

Xia Shiyu gently bit her lip and felt the warmth around her body, as she tried avoiding his eyes. She thought she would fight back, but the strange thing was that her first reaction was calmness.

Maybe she didn't realize that, subconsciously, she didn't mind the forceful move. The always emotionless face was just a bad camouflage for herself. When Jiang Chen picked her up forcefully, it made her heart beat faster, and she felt anxious.

Or, it was a sense of security?

The same odd feeling came back again...

Xia Shiyu closed her eyes, still not accepting it.



Jiang Chen carried Xia Shiyu downstairs and disregarded the curious and concerned looks of the people around them. He opened the car door, helped Xia Shiyu into the passenger seat, and put the seatbelt on her before getting in.

“Your new car?” Xia Shiyu weakly leaned against the car seat as her chest pumped up and down.

“Maybach S600, a gift from buying the house,” Jiang Chen casually answered and started the car.

“...” What kind of house would give a car as a gift? Xia Shiyu was curious but didn’t have the energy to ask.

“I told you that if you didn't feel okay to call me. Look at you now,” Jiang Chen said as he steered the wheel.

“I can just eat some medicine, there’s nothing to worry about.” Although her voice sounded like she didn’t care, she felt warmth surround her heart.

“Hehe, you say this is nothing to worry about? You are almost unconscious! You live alone, and no one is taking care of you. If I didn’t have something to talk to you about today, no one would know if you became unconscious. Your body probably would stink before someone discovered it,” Jiang Chen said sharply.

[Well, you are here right?] Xia Shiyu pouted but stopped all of a sudden. She was surprised by such a girly act.

[Looks like the fever is making me confused...]

Xia Shiyu gently touched her forehead and felt the burning sensation.

The scenery flashed across the car window as silence ensued in the car. Although he just got the car, he drove it skillfully. Probably had to do with his 29 reflexes. But because they were in the city center, it was not even that fast.

“I am sick. Why do you care?” After a long silence, Xia Shiyu abruptly opened her mouth.

“Of course I care.” If you are sick, who is going to do the work?

Jiang Chen always believed in being a leader who only asked others to do things. If she was sick, why would he not be worried?

There may be other reasons, but he still hasn't figured them out.

But Xia Shiyu seemed to have interpreted it as something else, silence ensued again.

Maybe it was the fever, but her face was abnormally red.

They soon arrived at the nearest hospital. Jiang Chen parked the car and immediately ran to the other side to open the door. But

when he was about to use the same gesture to carry Xia Shiyu, she stopped him.

“I can walk by myself. You don’t need to help me. That way is too embarrassing.” Xia Shiyu’s faintly squeezed the last few words out of her mouth. The usually expressionless face now turned blood red. Jiang Chen was stunned by her beauty.

Under Jiang Chen’s intense stare, Xia Shiyu felt embarrassed but somewhat proud?

After she had given him a dirty look, Xia Shiyu dragged her heavy footsteps towards the hospital.

But how could he not worry about her “floaty” footsteps, she walked like this? She would probably get hurt before she even went into the hospital to see why she was sick.

Jiang Chen walked beside her and held onto the stubborn girl.

Although she fought back a little, Xia Shiyu knew her exact condition, so she didn’t stop Jiang Chen. She lowered her head and hid her unnatural expression beneath her hair.

The nurse on duty saw Xia Shiyu’s condition and immediately walked up to help. Jiang Chen left Xia Shiyu with the nurse and went to the front desk to fill out the paperwork. It would be up to the doctors now as he knew nothing about medicine.

To be honest, he was anxious about Xia Shiyu's condition. It didn't look like an ordinary fever or cold. Maybe because she fell ill because of all the work he piled onto her? Jiang Chen felt guilty about this.

Especially when they were buying the house, she was already feeling a bit sick. But he didn't immediately bring her to the hospital. Instead, he was having fun...

[Maybe it's time to control myself?]

With his arm pressed against his knee, he wandered into deep thought.

Although worried, it would be useless to just wait around. He sat on the hospital chair, feeling bored before he took out his phone.

He checked his Wechat to see that Liu Yao had sent him a message. For the energetic third-tier actress, Jiang Chen was happy to chat with her. If he was freer, he didn't mind hooking up. But he has been too busy recently, so he rejected the rather straightforward invitation.

The movie he promised her would happen since money was not an issue anymore.

To be truthful, it was fun chatting with this girl. His guilt and anxiety quickly faded, as a smile appeared on his face. Time passed by quickly on the phone.

“Hello, sir, are you Miss Xia Shiyu’s husband?” A doctor pushed opened the door and approached Jiang Chen.

“No, I am her... umm, friend.” Jiang Chen put his phone back and stood up.

“Miss Xia Shiyu only had a normal fever, but it was untreated for too long, so the condition is a bit serious now. I recommend you go to the front desk and register her stay at the hospital.” The doctor cut straight to the point and handed the bill to Jiang Chen, motioning him to go to the designated window.

The doctor’s casual attitude made Jiang Chen raise his eyebrow, but he didn’t say anything. He carried the bill and paid the fee, which was a total of one thousand dollars. He forced a smile as he thought, ordinary people would not be able to afford this. Minor or major, staying at the hospital was necessary, as was using the most expensive medicine. Do you want a problem? Are you going to see the doctor? Since there are so many people here, there’s never a shortage of patient.

Compared to real estate, the demand for education and healthcare was more steady and reliable. If they really wanted to turn the public sector into a private business sector, the potential gain would be greater than the real estate industry.

Though of course, now money meant nothing to Jiang Chen.

He then walked into the ward, grabbed a chair, and sat beside Xia

Shiyu's bed.

“Sorry for troubling you.” Xia Shiyu's eyes were half closed as she squeezed a sentence through her lips.

“No problem. Taking care of the staff is the responsibility of the president.” Jiang Chen waved his hand and then asked in a concerning voice, “Are you hungry? Tell me if you want to eat something.”

“Taking care of the staff?” Xia Shiyu didn't respond to Jiang Chen as she murmured under her breath.

“This is the first time I see you looking so confused,” Jiang Chen said smiling, as he ridiculed.

Xia Shiyu was silent before she abruptly said, “You just haven't seen it before.”

“Oh? Speaking of this, I am curious. If you are so beautiful, why do you always keep a cold face?”

“... I am tired.” Xia Shiyu closed her eyes and ignored his question.

Jiang Chen, with a bitter smile, shrugged and gave up. He looked at Xia Shiyu's now regular breathing and helped tuck her up. Then he let out a sigh and walked out of the ward.

[Looks like I am staying here tonight, it would be worrisome to leave her alone.]

Jiang Chen took out his phone and called Ayesha.

“I have something to do tonight and can’t go back, can you take care of yourself?”

“Mhmm. Don’t worry, I will be okay.”

A soft and gentle response echoed from the other side of the phone. It made Jiang Chen feel warm inside.

Although the girl looked even colder than Xia Shiyu when she was outside, whenever she was with Jiang Chen, she was gentler than a sheep.

“Goodnight.”

“Goodnight.” The choppy pronunciation surprised Jiang Chen as a delighted smile appeared on his face.

[That was Chinese, looks like she is making progress. I hope the day I can communicate with her in Chinese comes sooner. It's still weird to call in English.]

After the phone call, Jiang Chen stretched his body. Xia Shiyu

was already asleep, so he just needed to remind the nurse to change her medicine during the night.

Time to find a cup of coffee.

Jiang Chen made up his mind as he walked to the resting area of the hospital.



# Chapter 66: Hospital Conflict

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“Doctor, how is my father doing!”

“Mr. Wang, we are also worried as well, but rabies... even if you are at the best hospital in the world, it's still an unsolvable problem. We are really...” The doctor's face filled with grievance said. It was clear that the way he treated his man was much more polite compared to Jiang Chen.

“That's impossible! A dog hasn't bitten my father, how could he have gotten rabies!” The man's eyes were flushing red, and his fists were tightly clenched. He still couldn't believe what the doctor had said.

“Yes, we never had a dog before, my dad never came into contact with one. How...” The woman standing on the side said, her face pale.

“Rabies' incubation period could last up to one year. If he is not injected with vaccine on time, it's incurable.”

“What! What the fu\*k did you just say? Who's incurable?” The man furiously grabbed the collar of the doctor and scared frozen the nurse-to-be.

“Brother! Calm down!” The woman on the side tried to comfort her brother, who clearly was over his head, but it was futile.

“Mister, Mister Wang. That’s not what I meant. Please, please calm down.” The doctor that looked annoyingly at Jiang Chen before now had an almost crying expression.

For no other reason, but the fact that he couldn’t displease the person in front of him.

Rabies?

Jiang Chen leaned against the chair as he drank his coffee and watched the mess unfold. The man looked like someone with influence, or the doctor being hoisted up wouldn’t have said a thing nor keep apologizing.

Two men in buzz cuts and casual clothing stood beside the man. They looked like soldiers by the way they stood, probably active too.

Of course, Jiang Chen already experienced the war himself, so he was not too surprised by the identities of these people. He continued to watch for a few more moment before he going back to his phone. The only friend he could have a conversation with on Wechat was Liu Yao. She almost responded immediately to his message.

Being replied to by a celebrity substantially fulfilled his vanity, so he was happy to chat.

The bystanders in the restroom all left when they sensed the

situation turned sour. While people enjoyed watching conflicts, it was only when there was a lot of individuals. Because even if something happened, it wouldn't affect them. But with not a lot of people around, everyone was smart enough to stay away from the trouble. The group of people didn't look like friendly people.

Except for Jiang Chen, who was not afraid of anything, he continued to play with his phone while no one else stayed in the room.

The conflict naturally caught the attention of security, but they only stood on the side and didn't dare to step in. The doctor kept trying to convince the man to calm down and was too afraid to ask for help.

Maybe because of his sister's dissuasion, or maybe because he knew that rabies was hard to treat, the man regathered his breath and put the doctor down.

"Give me your phone," A rascal voice rang beside Jiang Chen's ear.

Jiang Chen looked up and raised his eyebrows.

He didn't know when, but the buzz cut bodyguard stood in front of him and leaned into his personal space. His facial expression looked precisely like that of a bully asking for lunch money. Arrogant and shameless.

The expression he had looked as if he had Jiang Chen's lunch money already.

“Oh? Give me a reason.” Jiang Chen wasn't angry as he started to laugh.

“Don't bullsh\*t me, if you don't want trouble then give it to papa now.” The guy didn't want to waste energy on Jiang Chen, as he directly reached for Jiang Chen's phone.

Most soldiers act entitled in some way, especially close guards of the masters. Li Gangming, eager to demonstrate his ability in front of his boss, didn't wait for his boss to say anything before he took huge strides towards Jiang Chen, asking for his phone.

But Jiang Chen's action surprised him. The harmless looking man just clamped onto his hand.

What made him even more frantic was that the clamped down hand couldn't move no matter how hard he tried.

Testing my strength?

The stubbornness of Li Gangming also came alive as his dark face turned red. He desperately tried to use his power to move his hand, but Jiang Chen just casually looked at his face and clamped his hand down like an iron claw, not letting him move a single inch.

[You are funny, 25 muscle strength is not something you can

overcome. I haven't even used fury yet, or I'd break your bones.

Soldiers? I have seen people kill people. People eat people. Why would I be afraid?]

“Li Gangming, what are you doing!” The woman who was trying to persuade her brother frowned as she angrily shouted at Li Gangming, who had his hands on Jiang Chen.

“Ahh, no, Miss Wang, this guy...” Sweat began to roll down Li Gangming's face as he explained to the sister of the politician.

“Let him go, why can't you do things nicely? You act exactly like my brother, always quick to jump into a fight.”

Because of the angle, she couldn't see the hands of the two people. But it was apparent that brother's soldier was bullying people again.

But Li Gangming's face looked like he just ate a fly. He wanted to explain that it was not him that didn't want to let go, but he didn't have the face to say it in front of his boss.

The man forced a smile when he heard his sister's words. He was about to signal Li Gangming to stop but was shocked.

“Nice moves, sir. What martial arts fraction are you part of?” A sharp glare shot out from Wang Zhiyong's eyes as he could clearly see Jiang Chen's power.

Li Gangming is a good fighter in his battalion, but he couldn't even move under the grasp of this man. It was something more than strength alone. In his eyes, he already considered Jiang Chen an "Inner Technique" master. Wang Zhiyong always had a keen interest in martial arts, or he wouldn't have just left the huge presence of his family to join the military.

The unfortunate thing was that Jiang Chen managed to do so by just using his strength. In pure strength, only Superman, or Batman could be comparable to him.

He didn't want to cause trouble, so he stopped when he had made his point. He let out of Li Gangming's hand, and emotionlessly said.

"No martial arts, that was pure strength." [Martial arts? I don't have time for that.]

But in Wang Zhiyong's eyes, Jiang Chen's casual and carefree expression resembled a martial arts master.

"Impeccable strength! Sir, are you interested in joining the army?"

Jiang Chen's face twitched. [I am already a billionaire. Am I dumb or are you dumb for me to become your soldier.]

His eyes moved as he thought about how he should phrase his

words.

“That’s okay, I am used to the free life.”

“Brother, are you out of your mind! Father is still lying there. You, why is it that every time you see someone who can fight, you want to ask them to join your army? I can’t believe you!” The energetic girl frowned at her brother as she said worriedly.

Wang Zhiyong’s face also turned sour as he thought about his father. His body was perfectly fine, and suddenly he got rabies?

“Please don’t let this bother you, my brother is just an inconsiderate guy. His head is messed up because he watched too many Wushu shows at a young age,” The girl said while poked her brother’s arm. She then lowered her head to apologize.

“Li Gangming was only worried that you took a video. You know the internet is a scary thing. If something was uploaded onto the web, it might affect brother’s progression. So...”

The girl looked at Jiang Chen with a serene smile.

Although Li Gangming on the side had acted like a bully most of his life, it was based on the context he could win. Now that his boss’ sister already apologized, if he continued to act tough, it would be rude.

Resisting the soreness on his wrist, Li Gangming put his fists

together and apologized to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smiled as he never intentionally looked for trouble. Since they already said sorry, he happily accepted it.

He opened the photo album on his phone and waved it in front of Li Gangming's face to prove that he didn't take any photos or videos. Seeing Li Gangming nod in confirmation, the reasonable and graceful miss expressed her gratitude again.

The small conflict was resolved with ease.

At the same time, the straightforward man abruptly opened his mouth and said a sentence that made Jiang Chen want to laugh.

“Sir, do you have any way of treating rabies?”



## Chapter 67: A Pillow just when you need it

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[Could I treat rabies? Do I looked like an old Chinese medical doctor to you?] Jiang Chen with an odd expression touched his face.

“Brother, are you crazy?” His sister, standing beside him, face palmed as the doctor and nurses also gave off helpless expressions.

Even Li Gangming’s face twitched, Jiang Chen guessed that this guy must have wanted to laugh, but didn’t dare to do so.

But Wang Zhiyong gazed at Jiang Chen, full of expectations. As if he was certain Jiang Chen would know a way.

Rabies?

A smile full of meaning appeared on Jiang Chen’s face.

Rabies actually was not a problem to him. For the 21st century medical practices, it was an incurable disease, but it was easily solved in the 22nd century.

In his storage, there was a D-level antibiotic that clearly stated it would cure rabies, aids...

He purchased it the first time he went to the Sixth Street after he injected the genetic vaccine. Even after Sun Jiao told him that

after the injection of the genetic vaccine, his body would be resistant to most of the diseases, he decided to buy it because it was cool. “I understand the rationale, but I just want to buy it because I haven’t heard of the existence of a “godly” medicine. It’s not like I lack crystals.”

He forgot that he had it in his storage dimension or else he would have given it to Xia Shiyu, saving the trip to the hospital.

“What’s your name, sir?” However, seriousness showed on Wang Zhiyong’s face.

Or the expression of grasping onto the last straw.

Although western medicine could not cure rabies, his fantasy for Wushu made him believe that a “secret cure” was out there to cure the incurable disease.

Wang Zhiyong was always this straightforward. He would immediately do something even if it did not go through his head.

Normally that would have been rude and unreasonable, but now he seemed filial.

But the “secret cure” didn’t exist. If it did exist, then their ancestors should be awarded a Nobel prize.

The medicine was in the storage dimension.

But Jiang Chen was hesitant.

[Should he save the person?

Or how should he save the person.]

“Jiang Chen.” He first introduced himself.

“My name is Wang Zhiyong, this is my sister Wang Xinran. If Sir you know any masters that could save my father, I’ll do anything to repay the favor!” Wang Zhiyong held his fists together and greeted.

Jiang Chen looked troubled as he pondered.

It was clear that Wang Zhiyong is an important military official. From this “bastard’s” attitude, he didn’t just depend on himself to climb the social ladder. Then it must mean his father is extremely influential.

Jiang Chen now had no support in Wanghai city. Although he has the money and the guns, if he did get himself into trouble, it would be problematic. Running to Los Angeles was not something he wanted to do soon. Who knows if that crazy guy solved his own issue yet.

He considered that his wealth could attract potential

wrongdoers, and so he actually did try to make some friends within the political circle. Regardless of the method, he must find a way to establish a relationship. Or else, if he created some unique and someone forcefully took over, he would have nowhere to reason. Since the political situation in the country was like this, he must play by the rules.

What kind of favor was greater than saving a life? This was a great opportunity.

A Pillow just when you needed it the most.

Jiang Chen was moved, but he still needed to think of a way to make this story sound more believable.

Wang Zhiyong looked simple minded, so he should be easy to convince. But his sister seemed to be intelligent and hard to fool. If he just took out the medicine, it would be hard to explain. The authenticity would also be questioned.

[This is troublesome. Even when trying to do something “nice”, there were still a lot of aspects to consider need to consider...] Jiang Chen smiled bitterly.

“Brother, do you want someone to find an ancient natural remedy for you to cure father’s sickness?” Wang Xinran was speechless with his brother’s intent.

“What ancient natural remedy. How do you know Chinese

medicine will not solve the problem Eastern medicine can't!" Wang Zhiyong's face blushed as he gave a dirty look to his sister.

Wang Zhiyong now realized that he didn't process the words before they came out. But if he admitted, he would lose face in front of everyone.

The doctor also gave a wry smile. He studied Chinese medicine before as he knew that this could not be solved by Chinese medicine.

"Ahem. I think I can try."

The entire restroom fell silent.

Jiang Chen already expected the reaction as he didn't look too shocked. He still maintained his calm composure.

Who said acting cocky was terrible?

"That's impossible!" The doctor, whose collar was held, opened his mouth in disbelief. He looked at Jiang Chen with skepticism, "If someone could cure rabies, that's enough to win a Nobel Prize."

"Too bad I am not interested in fame." Jiang Chen shrugged as he looked at Wang Zhiyong. "Of course, I don't need you to repay me anything. I have a company myself, so I don't need money. As to why I am helping you, it's because I have a father too."

Wang Xinran skeptically looked at Jiang Chen. Different from her incompetent brother, she was a top student at Wanghai University. Although she studied media, which is unrelated to medicine, she still had basic common sense.

“Can you cure my father? Let me be straight forward, my dad is Wanghai City’s General Secretary (Considered the most influential person in a municipal government), if you...”

“I understand your emotions towards your father, but that doesn’t mean I have to accept this suspicion. If you choose to not believe, just say no.” Jiang Chen shook his head. “I am doing this out of the good of my heart, and I don’t need you to repay me. But I hope you do know, standard medical procedures would not cure rabies.”

When he finished, Jiang Chen looked at Wang Zhiyong.

Wang Zhiyong raised his eyebrows in deep thoughts.

[Should I try it?]

Sister and doctor’s words made him hesitant. What if Jiang Chen was a liar and killed his father...

Wait, even if he didn’t, Rabies was an incurable disease!

Rather than waiting for death, why not try it. He had thought about it before making up his mind to take a gamble.

He was someone that cared deeply about his parents. Since the reason he can act so recklessly in Wanghai was due to his father's influence. If his father were not here to cover for him, he would have died so many times already.

"I believe you, I hope what are you said is true." Wang Zhiyong sincerely nodded. He then gazed at Jiang Chen with seriousness. "If you actually cured my father, even if you don't accept my favor, I'll be at your disposal."

[Psh, why did that sound like someone from a gang, are you really in the military?]

"I don't need anyone at my disposal, but a friend doesn't sound too bad." Jiang Chen laughed nonchalantly and passed by Wang Zhiyong before he walked into the guarded ward.

Wang Zhiyong had paused for a minute before he smiled.

[Hmm? This guy is fascinating.]

He was known for his recklessness in Wanghai city; he was not afraid of anything. Since he was commander of the army and his father was also a national level politician, considered second in command even in the central government, the typical silk trousers (referred to children of influential leaders that cause havoc) were

no match for him. Although he did create his fair share of recklessness, he still had his own principles. It may have been influenced by the Wushu novels he had read.

He also has another trait, which is to make friend with people that possessed abilities. Of course, most of them belonged to the category that knew how to fight, so he has a lot of reckless buddies as well.

Since he believed in Wushu, he always wanted to receive tips from masters and cultivate his soul to train internal techniques. Because of this, his sister always criticized him for reading too much fantasy novels and distorting reality.

“Ten minutes, give me ten minutes, I hope no one interrupts me.”

Jiang Chen had left those words before he locked the door behind him, looking mysterious.

The people left behind were all stunned.



# Chapter 68: Cured?

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Jiang Chen, alone, stood in the middle of the room and he scanned his surroundings.

The special ward, for notable guests, was filled with medical equipment, but all useless for treating rabies.

He hesitated for a moment as he wasn't certain if there were cameras around, then Jiang Chen sighed before he reached into his pocket.

For his own security, he triggered the EMP grenade.

The faint electric noise resonated in the room as the EP screen inside his sleeves had flashed before it stabilized. With stability as the core design philosophy, it was extremely resistant to EMP. However, of course, equipment in that age was not the same as all the other electronics in the room, which have been short-circuited. These faults were hard to detect as most people would attribute instability to the voltage source.

Regardless if there were cameras or not, it would be broken by now. There was no expensive medical equipment inside this ward, so the hospital wouldn't consider it a big deal. As to his phone, he threw it into the storage dimension immediately.

He approached the old man as he took out the D-level antibiotics. He took a deep breath before aiming it at the old man's vein and injecting it.

He watched the red liquid enter his body as he pulled out the needle and put it in the storage dimension. The old man was already unconscious from being at the terminal stage of rabies, so he was not afraid to have his secret revealed.

Also, the D-level antibiotic has no side effects on the human body. It was evident by the fact that the remaining medicine would be cleared out from the body within an hour. Even a blood test would not detect any traces of it.

Especially no one would experiment on the second in command of the local government.

“How’s my father doing?” Seeing that Jiang Chen came out, Wang Zhiyong immediately walked up to ask.

“He’ll be okay after some sleep,” Jiang Chen smiled as he replied.

“That’s impossible.” The doctor still maintained his stance as he looked suspiciously at Jiang Chen before walking into the ward.

He didn’t believe that Jiang Chen would cure that important person’s disease. He was only worried that if he dies, even if it were not his responsibility, he would also take on some of the blame.

“Could I have your phone number? So that if father wakes up, we can express our sincere gratitude,” Wang Xinran said.

Although she still looked at Jiang Chen with suspicion, since he had already treated her father, there was nothing she could say.

[Thanking me is not the point. It is probably more of a threat to make sure I didn't do anything wrong.] Jiang Chen obviously guessed her intention. He shrugged as he pulled out his identification card and flashed it in front of her face.

If they want to know, they will find their way.

Seeing that Jiang Chen immediately pulled out his identification card, Wang Xinran felt her face burn from embarrassment. She knew that he understood her trick. He did this with good intention, but she was still suspicious till now, which was inconsiderate and unreasonable by any means.

But Wang Zhiyong who's straightforward didn't have any tricks, as he never liked the idea of trickery.

"No need for ID. Let's exchange phone numbers. You'll be my brother from now on! If anyone dares to touch you, I will go beat him up!" Wang Zhiyong pulled out his iPhone as he began to call Jiang Chen brother. With the way Jiang Chen looked, he was certain that his father would be okay.

"That's impossible!" Suddenly, a shocked shout came from the ward.

“What’s going on?” Wang Zhiyong was confused.

“Father!” Before he understood what was happened, his sister ran into the room.

“Your father’s health is in good condition, he probably woke up already,” Jiang Chen shrugged as he said nonchalantly with a smile.

Wang Zhiyong was overjoyed when he heard the news as he thanked Jiang Chen and ran into the ward.

Jiang Chen smiled. Although this guy was reckless, just by how much he cared for his father, it was worth it to befriend him.

“Sir, what method did you use?” The doctor walked out as he had no more suspicion in his eyes, only respect.

“Secret. Sorry, but I can’t share.” Jiang Chen smiled mysteriously.

“Do you know how many people this will save if rabies can be cured? There are 55 thousand people a year who die because of this disease. If you publish this secret...” This doctor obviously was not ready to let Jiang Chen go as he started to guilt trip him, hoping Jiang Chen would reveal the secret.

But Jiang Chen being annoyed, interrupted the doctor.

“And give it to you so you can win a Nobel Prize?”

Jiang Chen’s words made the doctor’s face turn a vibrant shade of red. He did think about that.

“When it is necessary I’ll share it, with my own name.” Jiang Chen walked away, finishing the sentence.

If they wanted to thank him, he wouldn’t have to wait here. It would be straightforward for the government to find his number, especially since Wang Xinran just saw his ID.

Leaving without saying anything would leave a more memorable impression.

—

“Is, is this the hospital?” Wang Dehai’s eyes narrowed as he gradually woke up from unconsciousness. From the sharp edges of his face, it was evident that although he has aged, his body was healthy. But regardless of health, with a disease like rabies, he would die without the proper treatment.

“Father, you are finally awake.” Wang Xinran had tears in her eyes. She was the youngest in the family and received the most affection from her father. Her father’s weak look impacted her feel the most. But her tears were tears of happiness.

“I, didn’t I get rabies?” Wang Dehai was confused as he was ready to face death. But life played a joke on him. He looked at his disappointing son in search of an answer.

“Father, hehe, I found an ancient remedy doctor, and he cured you,” Wang Zhiyong said proudly.

An ancient remedy doctor?

Wang Dehai was so angry he almost coughed out blood. He was especially annoyed by his son’s fantasy for masters, Wushu, and martial arts, which was an embarrassment to the family. But when he remembered that he had an incurable disease, he was shocked.

[An ancient remedy doctor actually cured me?]

He looked at his most beloved daughter but what surprised him was that the answer he saw on her face was, it’s true.

“Although I don’t want to admit this, brother actually did find an ancient remedy doctor to cure you.”

Jiang Chen would be furious if he heard the words “Ancient remedy doctor”. This was advanced technology!

[Really?] Wang Dehai frowned, but then he felt relieved.

“What is there not to admit, if he cured me he cured. Even if he is

an ancient remedy doctor, he is my lifesaver! How much money does he want? Give it to him.” Wang Dehai had experienced the ups and downs of life. Since he could live longer, no one would say no to his requests, especially when he was so powerful.

“Father, he doesn't need money, that's too lame.” Wang Zhiyong rolled his eyes. His words were always unpredictable.

Wang Dehai, of course, knew his son's personality; he would believe anything they say.

“Go invite the person, I want to thank him personally.” Regardless, he must thank him for saving his life. Wang Dehai already was thinking that as long as it is not against his principle, he'll do his best to meet the “ancient remedy doctor's demand.

He was a powerful and influential politician in the country. Jiang Chen saved him. Not only did he do a favor to him, but also to the country itself.

“Okay.” Wang Zhiyong laughed as he ran outside.

Wang Dehai lied on the bed as he chatted with his daughter about what happened when he was unconscious. However, he kept thinking about the “master” that saved him. Wang Dehai was no ordinary people. He didn't understand how did the “ancient remedy doctor” managed to save him, or who sent him here.

However, his disappointing son came back alone with a

disappointed look.

“Father, he left.”

“What?” Wang Dehai was shocked.

[There really is someone who didn't seek favors?]

“Didn't you exchange phone number with Jiang Chen?” Wang Xinran hastily said.

“I didn't get to. I had to check on father,” Wang Zhiyong said with disappointment in his voice.

“You, how old are you, why are you still so careless,” Wang Dehai criticized his son for a good while.

Although Wang Zhiyong was reckless, he still didn't dare to talk back to his father. He just had to listen to his dad's criticism.

Jiang Chen.

Wang Dehai remembered that name. Though he didn't know what his life saver looks like, it was not difficult for him to find someone in the country.

Wang Dehai, who has always been cautious, didn't express his



thoughts. He decided to wait and get an understanding of Jiang Chen's background to see what kind of intention he had before approaching him, himself to repay the favor. For he might be a pawn sent by political enemies.

Wang Dehai closed his eyes as he made up his mind. He needed to rest. Since he had already recovered, then some change must be made in Wanghai City. Once he wakes up tomorrow, the people that tried to give the Wang family trouble will all be punished.

Although he was well into his fifties, the vibe Wang Dehai possessed was not to be undermined.

Wang Zhiyong who saw his father's expression let out a breath of relief. He knew exactly what his father's expression meant. A rejoiced look appeared on his face.

[Father is healthy now, a lot of people are going to be in trouble.]

He was still upset that he didn't manage to get Jiang Chen's number. His intention was clear. Since he did something nice for me, then I must repay him in kind.

But what he meant by repaying the favor meant taking Jiang Chen around to show off. He loved two things the most, making friends and finding trouble. Those two things usually don't conflict with each other, but he didn't expect Jiang Chen would leave right away.

Wang Zhiyong and Wang Dehai didn't know that Jiang Chen didn't leave, he was waiting in a ward nearby.

Wang Xinran, on the other hand, was more curious. She didn't know how Jiang Chen saved her father.

Li Gangming standing in front of the door had a sour face. He could only pray that they would not remember the conflict. The look of sympathy from the other guard made him want to slap himself. Why didn't he think before he acted?

But even if he thought it through, the consequence would probably be the same. Recklessness is contagious from being around Wang Zhiyong for so long.

# Chapter 69: The Future 1.0 That Shocked the World

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Artificial intelligence was a word most people on the internet were familiar with. They usually played the antagonist role in the action-packed Hollywood movies, only to have their plans of world domination gloriously foiled by the protagonist.

It could be seen from the mainstream media that humankind had always been skeptical and afraid of artificial intelligence.

The perception was logical; they were, after all, beings not reliant on a physical body, both eternal and wise. There was no reason for such a “god” to abide by the rules of humans.

However, ventures into artificial intelligence research never ceased. From novels written in the 1950s that imagined the future of artificial intelligence to IBM’s development of Watson who could design a menu and voluntarily participate in contests—within sixty years, artificial intelligence had made leaps and bounds.

What about in another sixty years?

There was no need for another sixty years; the Chinese internet user could now experience it in the present.

An unknown software—as if carefully planned—entered the Android platform, 361 stores, and the APP store. The download

number exploded exponentially, breaking one million downloads on the tenth day after release, beating Line's record at six hundred thousand downloads a day.

This could only be described as a miracle.

Using common sense, it would still take great marketing to pull off such a feat. Otherwise, no matter how amazing the app, it would take time for anyone to become familiar with the product. Future Technology Corporation—it was a name no one ever had heard before.

Artificial intelligence? A changed algorithm with an increase in phone performance by threefold? Decrease power consumption by half? Automatic compatibility with both Android and iOS apps? Did they take all of the users for fools?

Fu\*k, it actually has artificial intelligence that can speak? Siri is so dumb in comparison.

Fu\*k, it actually increased the phone performance by three times! Even cheap phones can play high-end games now without any lag!

Fu\*k, it actually decreased the power consumption by half. My Huawei has a battery span of two days now!

A chain of explosive reactions ensued, followed by an exponential number of downloads. The waves of good ratings and comments convinced the skeptical users to join the forces. In response to

their shocking discovery, they also joined in promoting the app.

Future 1.0 officially caught the attention of all mobile users.

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Within 361 Corporation headquarters.

"I want to know the developer of this app, as well as the background of Future Technology. I don't care how you do it; I want a detailed report on my table in two hours." 361 Corporation's president Zhou Hongwei sat at his office desk, rubbing his forehead in an attempt to alleviate his tiredness as he gave a task to 361 Phone Helper's Project Manager Zhang Jianfeng.

"Yes." The middle aged man nodded as he hastily walked out of the office.

"Boss, is the Future 1.0 as scary as it sounds?" The assistant couldn't resist asking after seeing her boss's gloomy expression.

"Do you know what artificial intelligence and enhanced phone functionality mean?" Zhou Hongwei sneered with raised eyebrows.

"But based on user dependency and..."

"Don't mention those things; those are applicable when the software are comparable." Zhou Hongwei rejected the assistant's

point right away. "Would you continue to use an old flip phone after the introduction of a smartphone?"

The young assistant was speechless, unable to argue against her boss's point. Even if the book said otherwise, the reality was right in front of her.

"The introduction of the touch screen replaced the necessity to have fifteen physical buttons, but the Future 1.0 replaced the need to use fingers. The increased phone performance also broke through the limitation of mobile game development. The two breakthrough technologies exist on one software. Pity, if even one of them had been born in our 361 Corporation, I have full confidence that I would've been able to replace Penguin and become the new leader in the tech industry."

The thought of his horrendous defeat against Penguin in a battle for market shares enraged him to this day.

Zhou Hongwei's finger gently tapped against the table amidst the assistant's silence.

Less than half an hour later, the door was pushed open.

Zhang Jianfeng did not bother to knock on the door as he hastily approached his boss.

"The information is here."

"Excellent." Zhou Hongwei immediately began reading the information. Instead of criticizing him for his informality, he was pleased by the efficiency.

After scanning through the document with a frown, Zhou Hongwei immediately handed another task to his assistant.

"Go and contact Gu Cheng from the technology's department. I give him permission to use any developers from any project. My only requirement is that I want to see a cracked version of Future 1.0 in a week."

"Yes." The assistant nodded as she stepped out.

Immediately, Zhou Hongwei gave directives to his right-hand man Zhang Weifeng.

"Zhang Jianfeng, go contact Future Technology's owner Jiang Chen and discuss the possibility of an acquisition. If it can be purchased, then that would be the best option. If he asks for a price within 2 billion, I give you permission to accept right away. At the same time, ask if he is interesting in working for 361."

"Yes." Zhang Jianfeng nodded, agreeing that the price his boss offered was not too high. As the 361 Phone Helper's Project Manager, he knew the value of this app.

2 Billion RMB? Even 2 billion USD was not enough. Zhang Jianfeng could only hope that Jiang Chen was too new to know the

value of his software and would be shocked by the billion dollar offer.

But was that possible? Jiang Chen's own valuation for the company was over trillions.

USD.

At the same time, what happened in 361 was also taking place in Baidu, QQ's headquarters, and even in the overseas Samsung, Microsoft, and Apple technology giants who expressed significant interest towards the app born in China.

Acquisition, cracking, joint venture... A series of meetings revolved around the "giant bomb" that was Future 1.0.

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"Marketing expenditure of five hundred ninety thousand includes creating impressions on social media, utilizing platforms such as Baidu, Wechat, and QQ, as well as other forms of advertisement."

Xiao Shiyu had recovered from her cold. In professional attire, she concisely reported the company development before Jiang Chen.

The work could have been completed like usual in Xia Shiyu's home, but for whatever reason, the girl strongly opposed this idea.



Using the excuse of the newly renovated office, she argued that the company should start on the right track and changed the work location to here.

The girl's cold attitude made Jiang Chen feel extremely "hurt" as he had stayed with her for the entire night when she had been sick.

"What's the download number?" Jiang Chen leaned against the chair and asked in a lazy tone.

Perhaps used to his complacent work attitude, Xia Shiyu did not look displeased. She took out another report and continued, "Future 1.0's total download has reached 20 million, with the record high reached on the tenth day."

"Only 20 million?" Jiang Chen frowned as he was unsatisfied.

"This is not bad, okay?" Xia Shiyu rolled her eyes at him. As soon as she woke up from her sickness, the first person she saw was Jiang Chen; afterwards, the way she treated him became ambiguous.

"There are at least five hundred million smartphone users in China, and this is a conservative estimate. I only have 20 million out of this giant market. How is that not a little." Jiang Chen was trying to prove this point.

"It's predicted that the user base will break the one hundred million mark by the end of August. Since our user base is too small,

this is a commendable result." Xia Shiyu flipped through the document as she explained.

"You don't have to be so concerned. I am certain of your ability, Miss CEO." Jiang Chen grinned.

"I am not concerned!" Xia Shiyu rebutted.

But then she realized that arguing with the shameless Jiang Chen was futile, so she took a deep breath and brought the conversation back on topic. "There is a total of twelve companies that announced interest in partnership and acquisition."

"Partnership, I am interested. You can arrange a schedule for me; I'll personally chat with them. As to acquisition, you can reject them without asking for my permission." Jiang Chen stretched.

"Oh? IBM offered one point three billion USD." Xia Shiyu raised her eyebrows as she shoved the letter of intent into Jiang Chen's arms with a smirk.

"Hehe, I won't sell it for thirteen billion USD." Jiang Chen took the letter of intent and threw it into the garbage without a glance at the page.

Xia Shiyu's mouth curved up at Jiang Chen's response. She held the same opinion as Jiang Chen on the value of this software.

Suddenly, as if she just remembered something, she hesitated for

a moment before she opened her mouth. "Also, President, I have another thing I want to confirm with you."

"What? You don't have to call me president, just call me Jiang Chen." Jiang Chen waved his hand.

"Please keep business and personal life separate, Mr. President." Xia Shiyu smoothly replied as she continued on the topic, "The quality of Future 1.0 is without a doubt impeccable. But regarding privacy, do we not need to submit a patent?"

"Privacy? There is privacy for software in this country?" Jiang Chen laughed at her rhetorical question.

Xia Shiyu was speechless, but she still offered her own opinion.

"At least we will gain the advantage from a legal perspective. If another company uses our technology without permission, we can proceed with legal action."

"Submitting the patent means we have to provide a detailed explanation of our technology. To be honest, I don't trust them." Jiang Chen was straightforward. "I am confident that within fifty years, no one will be able to crack Future 1.0. Moreover, in a couple of years, Future 2.0 will be introduced. As long as we remain the pioneer of this industry, we don't need a patent."

The nature of the patent was to receive protection and exclusive rights in exchange for sharing information. The patent required

sufficient disclosure of the technical information which would allow people to replicate the technology.

But that was the last thing he wanted to do; how would it benefit him to disclose D++? He was not some selfless philanthropist.

Xia Shiyu remained silent. She didn't know where Jiang Chen's confidence or the fifty years remark came from, but surprisingly, she didn't insist on it and chose to trust him.

"Okay, since the majority shareholder has already made the decision, then Future 1.0's core technology will be classified as a business secret. The relevant privacy information would require you to discuss with the software developer."

His title was the chief developer of this app, but it was only a fake role. The setting disclosed to the public was that an overseas developer team created Future 1.0 while his position only required him to represent the team.

Just like deceiving Zhao Chenwu, except he was deceiving the whole world this time.

Do you want to find the real developers? Go ahead; it's in the other world.

Jiang Chen nodded as he didn't say anything more.

If a programming language developed 100 years into the future

managed to be cracked by the people of this time, it would literally have to be done by supernatural activity. As an example, it was like asking someone to program using the C language when they had never learned it before. Even with the unencrypted code provided, the person was required to understand first; the only way was to guess and learn a language with stronger logic flow compared to C.

"On the other hand, considering Future Technology's growing popularity, I have contacted Wanghai University's administration and students to adjust the hiring time and location," Xia Shiyu said.

"Oh? You don't have to report these things to me, just give me a schedule, and I'll make time to take care of it." Jiang Chen shrugged.

"This is not a small task. Talent acquisition is critical to the future of the company, especially the first batch of employees—they will become the core of the company's operation. From personality to knowledge, everything must be tested under a strict process."

"Okay, because I trust your ability, I'm assigning this important task to you."

Xia Shiyu's face burned under Jiang Chen's "passionate" gaze, but because she had light makeup on, with her limited facial expressions, Jiang Chen didn't notice her odd reaction.

"Okay." Although she wanted to criticize Jiang Chen into at least

preparing for the interview process, everything she wanted to say turned into one word.

"Then let's go with this decision." Jiang Chen laughed as he stood up from the office chair and walked to the door behind Xia Shiyu. "Call me if you have anything. If I'm not within the service zone, send me a text, and I'll call you back when I see."

Jiang Chen then left the company, leaving Xia Shiyu staring blankly into space.

[Is there a president this irresponsible?]

Xia Shiyu rubbed her face with her hand.

There was another thing she didn't report: seven companies extended offers to her as shareholder and CEO of Future Technology. These companies included world-renowned technology giants where every graduate dreamed to work at.

If it were like before, she would most likely have taken a look at this information. But this time, without glancing at it, she shredded it. Even she was surprised by her decisiveness.

[With Future 1.0's potential, there is no need to consider the tech companies that are about to get reshuffled. President... Jiang Chen, he is probably working hard in areas I can't see. Future 1.0 can't drop from the sky, right?] Xia Shiyu convinced herself.

She glanced at the messy documents, sighing at Jiang Chen's work habit.

She organized them into categories before she left the president's office, gently closing the door behind her.

# Chapter 70: Catching the Wind

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Wanghai University's female dormitory.

“Lulu, what are you doing?” Wang Xinran suddenly hugged her best friend from behind and giggled as she drew her face closer to the phone.

“Stop, stop, I’m playing Hearthstone.” Chen Lulu concentrated on the screen; she was a typical gamer girl.

“Eh? That’s boring. Wait, I heard that Android can’t play Hearthstone.” Wang Xinran curiously said as she recalled.

“Hehe, this is where you don’t understand. After I finish this game, I’ll show you my adorable Little White.” With a conceited smile at the opponent’s disappointed voice saying <You defeated me>, she delightfully stretched.

“Am I not amazing at Hearthstone?” Chen Lulu raised her eyebrows as she said proudly.

“I don’t play the game.” Wang Xinran pouted but then returned to her previous question. “Tell me, how did you play an iOS game on Android?”

Rather than Hearthstone, she was more interested in this. As a media major student and the producer of Wanghai University’s campus news team, she sensed a scoop from this interesting



discovery.

“Wait, wait. Boom! Look, my Little White.” Chen Lulu comforted this short-tempered best friend and revealed her “baby.”

“What is this? A digital pet?” Wang Xinran sighed. She never had an interest in these phone games, but the chubby robot did look adorable.

“Try talking with him,” Chen Lulu said mysteriously.

Wang Xinran blanked out before she looked at her friend with confusion.

Chen Lulu seemed to expect Wang Xinran's confusion, but she ignored her and spoke to the phone screen.

"Little White, sister's friend doesn't believe you can talk. Can you find a way for her to like you?"

Wang Xinran rolled her eyes at Chen Lulu. Was this girl crazy because she gamed too much?

But the next second, she was completely stunned.

"I don't care about other people as long as Master likes me, hehe." The adorable electronic voice didn't sound cold at all, as if it came from a real human. Little White's voice was full of emotion as he

lied down, exposing his belly.

"That's not okay. Xinran is sister's best friend." From the outsider's perspective, Chen Lulu talking to the phone looked comical, but Wang Xinran was too fixated on the situation to ridicule her.

"Okay..." Little White got up begrudgingly and looked at Wang Xinran's direction with a cute blink of his big eyes. "Sister Xinran, can we be good friends?"

"You, are you customer service?" Wang Xinran blankly asked.

"No, Little White is an artificial intelligence," Little White puffed out his chest as he said proudly.

"How is this possible... wait! Then shouldn't every single action be repetitive? Why is that?" Wang Xinran suddenly thought of a more critical question.

Even Reixin's Simba—with only some gif images, such programs mimicked human behavior with limited and repetitive actions, regardless of how human-friendly the design.

But this Little White... he looked like he was alive on the screen.

"Little White, can you wave your hand?" Wang Xinran gulped as she asked.

"Like this?" Little White tilted his head because he initially didn't understand the question before he extended his short and chubby hand and waved.

Magical! It was alive, as if every frame of movement was not pre-planned but instead the action of Little White himself.

"I know what you are thinking; I was shocked too." Chen Lulu's vanity was fulfilled, pleased to see the shocked look on her friend's face. "Hehe, the function is not limited to this. Do you know that he can improve the phone processor efficiency by three times? I don't even know how he did it."

Improved by three times?

But facts like this didn't even surprise Wang Xinran anymore. Nothing could compare to the existence of artificial intelligence, and the fact that the guy who invented it thought to apply it to the phone industry. What a waste; it could have gone towards industries, environmental protection, aerospace, or even military.

She clearly envisioned greater possibilities for Little White.

"By the way, where did your home screen go?" Wang Xinran figured out another problem—her friend's home screen and apps had disappeared.

"Oh, those things. Little White, surprise her." Chen Lulu didn't

even move her finger as she propped the phone on the table at a slant.

"Okay." Little White adorably blinked.

"Take a photo of me and my best friend—the type that comes out pretty!" Chen Lulu turned her eyes before she suddenly hugged Wang Xinran and kissed her on the cheek.

"Oh come on, this is embarrassing!" Wang Xinran blushed, caught off guard by her best friend's actions.

Kacha.

A perfect photo was captured and saved for the best friends.

"Okay, help me send her a copy and open Hearthstone. I'm going to destroy some people."

"Hehe, okay, Master." Little White giggled. Just as the voice died, Wang Xinran felt the phone vibration from her pocket.

[So that's how it works. If it's like this, then the home screen is really not necessary.]

Wang Xinran smiled as she began to understand the software, then inquired about its origin.

"Oh, the software is called Future 1.0. The name sounds pretty sci-fi. You can download it on the Android market; it's only 53 megabytes! But you have to be careful and download the version from Future Technology! There are a lot of fake versions online which include some weird stuff and have nothing to do with Little White."

"There are already fake versions?" Wang Xinran was shocked. She had been preoccupied with family affairs for a time, and she was already so behind?

"Yes! The software is too popular. It's said that the software consecutively broke the daily download record!" Chen Lulu proudly said as if she had made the software herself.

"Sounds like it's your creation." Wang Xinran mocked her excited friend.

"Hehe, I heard that Future Technology's president and the chief developer is an alumni! My friend from software engineering said that their professor praised the product for half the class and predicted that a Bill Gates of the east would be born from Wanghai University. Apparently he made it sound like he personally taught the student. Also, a friend in the student union told me that they would come to our school to hire. Maybe I'll get the job." Chen Lulu proudly raised her small face.

"You are not even studying computer science, so why would you bother?" Wang Xinran poked her friend's head, speechless at her thought process.

It was true that she was in her fourth year already however; it was time to consider either the job market or go on to graduate studies.

"But I am studying law. What major corporation doesn't have a legal counsel?" Chen Lulu rolled her eyes at Wang Xinran and waved her tiny fists. "Ahem, my first task there will be to sue all of the copying bastards and teach them a lesson or two!"

"Yes! Sue them! Their version made me look so ugly." Little White peeked from the side of the screen and sounded terribly wronged.

Wang Xinran giggled. She sincerely wished for her friend's dream to become reality.

Also, she was curious about the alumni who developed this magical software. An unshaven computer genius? A top student with glasses? Or just an ordinary guy?

Interesting. Looks like it was time to report on this godlike person.

—

Jiang Chen leaned comfortably against the chair, the steam from his coffee wafting gently into the air. Xia Shiyu, dressed in sharp, professional attire, stood in front of his desk reporting on the

current progress.

The feeling was unreal.

His previous manager was standing in front of his table as an employee. It didn't matter what she was reading aloud; his own vanity was through the roof.

Of course, it was critical to focus on the business.

"There are fourteen fake softwares on the Android platform. Seven used Little White as the main attraction, three used our Future Technology's logo, and there are two versions of card games that directly used Little White's character."

"A tall tree catches the wind, a person in a high position is liable to be attacked. Don't worry. The internet user base is not dumb and will be selective in their choices. It's impossible to copy our software." Jiang Chen casually dismissed the issue.

"Because the Apple store has a stricter auditing process, there are no fake versions on the iOS platform." Xia Shiyu didn't mind Jiang Chen's interruption, finishing her report as usual before stating her opinion, "Just as the president said, our software privacy is impeccable. The current fake versions will never be able to replicate and replace our software, but their negative influence should not be underestimated either. If a user searched for us and saw a screen full of fake products, their first impression would be ruined. My recommendation is to immediately use legal methods to solve the problem."

"Looks like we need to form our legal team soon." Jiang Chen smiled.

"That's right, so please emphasize its importance in tomorrow's hiring fair. Also, a wave of negative opinions have emerged on the internet in an attempt to tarnish Future 1.0's reputation, creating the notion that artificial intelligence is extremely dangerous. At the same time, they raised concerns regarding Future 1.0's user privacy. For example, since mobile payment is a popular method, the user can complete transactions by telling the password to Little White and commanding him to complete the payment process. Therefore, users are worried about the possibility of Little White leaking the password, or even being hacked."

Privacy, it certainly was a problem.

If it was an emotionless program, despite its flawed backend design, people would not feel their privacy was threatened as long as the fact was not exposed on the table; yet, if it was an "emotional" artificial intelligence, even if it was designed flawlessly, people would subconsciously question it.

Because it was too similar to humans.

Jiang Chen's expression turned serious before he slowly opened his mouth and said, "This sort of concern is unnecessary, but with the current status quo, even if I made the guarantee now, it would not convince the users. How about this—publish a notice and establish Little White's absolute loyalty to the individual user. It is



written in the code and cannot be changed! No one other than the user can access personal information through Little White.

“Additionally, Little White recognizes the master through a combination of verbal and facial recognition technology, leaving it without any possibility of a security flaw! Any user that suffers financial loss because of an error in Little White's programming will receive full compensation from Future Technology!”

"What if a security error does exist?" Xia Shiyu had to interrupt as this notice was too absolute.

"It is impossible—you only need to trust this point. As for how the announcement will be written, use what I said as a reference and polish it up." Jiang Chen grinned.

"If you're so confident, then we'll follow your decision. Also, I'll create some public opinions using this notice as the backbone to repel the opposing comments." A hint of a smile bloomed on Xia Shiyu's face.

Although she didn't know the identity of the one behind the slander, once this guarantee was published, she had the confidence to turn the tide of ridicule towards a positive direction. She would use the negativity to push Future 1.0 to new heights.

Those malicious people with the intent to create obstacles for them would become the stepping stone for Future Technology.

"That's all for the bad news. Now let's talk about the good news." A bright smile appeared on Xia Shiyu's face as she pulled out another document.

"Future 1.0's total download number already exceeds fifty million with the daily download number still increasing exponentially. In the overseas market... Are you listening?" Xia Shiyu noticed Jiang Chen's unnatural expression and stuttered to a stop with a confused look.

"Ahh... continue?" Jiang Chen regathered his wits that had scattered at her smile.

That was his first time seeing her smile at work.

Was she okay?

Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows in concern, but Xia Shiyu interpreted it as a signal that he was back on track, so she cleared her throat and continued without requiring an answer to her question.

"Mhmm, President, please focus on the task at hand. In the overseas market, Future 1.0 has also achieved a substantial number; however, because Little White has yet to be compatible with another language, it cannot interact with international users. The general hope is for Future Technology to develop versions in other languages. Lastly, Google and Microsoft both extended queries for a partnership in developing artificial intelligence." Xia Shiyu finished and glanced at Jiang Chen.

Because of the software's encrypted nature, the only version on the market was in Chinese, leaving international users excited and unable to wait to get their hands on it.

"That's not a problem; it will be available shortly. As for the invitation from Google and Apple, if they want a partnership, it should be okay."

The artificial intelligence database already included 140 languages, but for the sake of decreasing the size of the file, Jiang Chen chose to eliminate all other languages; otherwise, the software would not have been 53 megabytes—it would have been 5300 megabytes.

Jiang Chen would make Du Yongkang release the overseas version once the time was right, but for now, the focus was on consolidating their position in the domestic market. As long as they announced the ongoing development of the international version, it would continue to build up the hype.

As for the foreigners who really couldn't wait, they would have to learn Chinese.

"Then I'll respond to them. The meeting will be scheduled three days after the hiring fair." Xia Shiyu pushed up her glasses. "To prevent the president from forgetting, I'll read the schedule again. In the morning, you'll meet with 361 Corporation's Phone Helper's Project Manager Zhang Jianfeng. In the afternoon, there's a press conference; many media sites would like to interview the "Bill

Gates from the east." I highly recommend you prepare beforehand. On the third day, you'll meet with representatives from Microsoft in the morning, Google's in the afternoon."

"Then wouldn't my schedule be full?" A bitter smile forced its way onto Jiang Chen's face.

"You could say that. Domestically, you still haven't met with representatives from six tech companies. I'll take care of the requests from the smaller corporations." Xia Shiyu nodded.

[Just shoot me now.]

Looking at Jiang Chen's bleak smile, Xia Shiyu felt a little shaken. She sighed and said gently, "You'll be busy only for this period of time. The company is in its initial phase; as the president, you must display positivity. After this month, your workload will be lighter."

An odd grin appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

"Is there something wrong?" she confusedly asked when she spotted his expression.

"You've changed."

"Hmm?" Xia Shiyu didn't understand.

"You are more caring now." Jiang Chen sincerely praised her.

"President, it's the same words, please." Xia Shiyu seemed somewhat frantic. As to why she felt frantic, she didn't know either.

"This is not a personal problem." He grinned, having already guessed her next words. "Only a caring superior can be a good president. I am more and more confident with your role as CEO."

"..." So it was not personal.

For some reason, Xia Shiyu felt disappointed in her heart.

"Hmm? How come now that I praise you, you look more serious now?" Jiang Chen was troubled.

Without another word, Xia Shiyu gently laid the documents on Jiang Chen's desk before stiffly walking out of the office.

[Strange woman.]

Jiang Chen shook his head before sipping his coffee.

[Why are they all so cold?]

# Chapter 71: Ayesha's Unique Trait

---

The mansion's renovation had been completed two days ago. After checking out from the hotel, he brought Ayesha to the mansion. With only two people, the massive estate did feel empty, but he was confident that one day, it would be filled with people.

Hehe.

At night, Jiang Chen drove his Maybach S600 back to the mansion. He hummed as he parked the car in the garage, then realized that Ayesha was already waiting for him.

He smiled as he walked towards her after closing the door.

"You don't have to wait for me at the door; I have the key," he said as he gently touched the dark brown hair.

"You are my husband. As the wife, it is my duty to wait for you to come home." Jiang Chen forced a smile at the Chinese words that came stiltedly from her mouth.

[Husband...]

The unexpected event had been his fault, but who could control themselves under the influence of alcohol?

[Ayesha's lack of resistance means part of the responsibility lies

on her as well. No, no, a man must take responsibility.]

[Worst case scenario, I'll have many wives! What rich guy doesn't have a mistress or two—the only difference is whether it's been documented or not. She did say that she doesn't care too much about the procedures.]

At this point, Jiang Chen no longer contemplated the matter as he always lived by his desires. He glanced apologetically at Ayesha as he let her undress him out of his suit and into casual casual clothing before they headed to the dining room for dinner.

Dinner consisted of steak, roasted lamb, and fresh salad. The raw ingredients had been bought from the store and prepared by Ayesha. It was evident that in order to fulfill her role as the “wife,” she spent much effort to raise her cooking skills.

Finally, he could eat fine meals in his own home. Jiang Chen was pleased with the idea alone. By himself, his cooking could only be considered modestly edible.

As for the lack of pork, he didn't mind as long as the meal tasted good.

"Is the taste okay?" Ayesha anxiously asked.

"Delicious!" Jiang Chen complimented her cooking with an affirmative nod.

Besides a fork and knife, Ayesha had thoughtfully prepared a pair of chopsticks for Jiang Chen. Although it was strange to eat steak with chopsticks, it was more convenient with spaghetti.

Jiang Chen ate comfortably and without restraint since they were within the privacy of their home.

"Great." At Jiang Chen's compliment, Ayesha sighed happily, then lowered her head and prayed before starting her meal.

The steak was a little too overdone, but considering she had just started cooking, her accomplishment was already impressive. The salad received high recognition from Jiang Chen as he devoured it with gravy and peppered french toast.

Overall, it was comparable to a meal at the restaurant.

Although, he enjoyed eating rice and cooked dishes more.

After dinner, Jiang Chen stately wiped his mouth before he praised Ayesha once more, causing a shy smile to creep onto her face.

This apathetic girl would only display soft tenderness in front of Jiang Chen.

While Ayesha took care of the dishes, Jiang Chen headed towards the gym on the third floor. He picked an empty space before placing the training chamber down from inside the storage



dimension. He then put 1000 crystals inside the energy before sealing it. One crystal provided enough power for ten hours, which meant 1000 crystals was more than enough.

Afterwards, Jiang Chen called Ayesha to the gym.

"I have something I need you to keep a secret, okay?" Jiang Chen gravely gazed into Ayesha's eyes.

"You are my life. I am willing to swear on my religion to prove my loyalty." Ayesha's expression remained unchanged as she said this calmly.

The moment Jiang Chen saved her, she had made an oath with her god.

Jiang Chen nodded, and then smiled.

"It's not that serious. I trust you. But what you'll see next will be unbelievable; if other people were to find out, it would not be good for me."

He then led Ayesha to the training chamber.

"It's a virtual reality training chamber. It will help you train the necessary skills while you're in a sleeping state. You only need to lie there and follow the directions of the system. Also, do you dislike weapons?" This was the critical question, and Jiang Chen gazed into her eyes as he asked for her opinion.

"I am willing to fight for you." Ayesha's response was still calm.

"Okay, but if you feel uncomfortable, you have to tell me." Jiang Chen nodded.

She smiled faintly as she luxuriated in Jiang Chen's care.

How could a woman who lived in the desert be afraid of weapons? She had seen too many tragedies; she was already desensitized to blood.

If Jiang Chen needed her to pick up her weapon and fight for him, he only needed to say the word; she'd swing her sharp blade at his enemy without hesitation.

Sensing the bloodlust in her eyes, Jiang Chen gave a strained smile as he attempted to adjust her mentality.

"I think you're mistaken about something. I don't want to train you into an assassin; I only need you to learn some combat abilities to use in dangerous situations as a bodyguard. For this, you need to learn Chinese, how to drive, and combat skills. As for the weapons guide in the training chamber, take a look only if you're interested. If not, there's no rush."

"Mhmm." Ayesha nodded. Although she didn't voice it, she had already made up her mind to learn everything.

Jiang Chen was delighted seeing Ayesha understand his intent.

A beautiful driver and bodyguard—the idea alone sounded fantastic.

"You don't have to go to class anymore; this training chamber is much more efficient to learn with. Also, you can first lie on that... yoga mat." Jiang Chen scanned the room, only to find that it was the only viable location.

Ayesha's face turned red and prepared to unbutton her clothes.

Seeing her action, Jiang Chen immediately realized the miscommunication.

"Ahem, no, not that! You just need to lie down, no need to undress." Jiang Chen quickly stopped her.

Confused, Ayesha looked at Jiang Chen before slowly lying down on the yoga mat.

"To improve your body condition, I'll inject a newly developed medicine. It has no side effects and will improve your muscle strength and reflex..." He tried to find a better way to word his explanation.

Suddenly, Ayesha placed her finger gently against his mouth. A cheerful smile appeared on the cold face.

"I'm willing to do anything for you."

Jiang Chen paused, and then grabbed her hand as he sincerely said, "Thank you."

By saving him the trouble of coming up with an explanation, she was showing her tenderness.

Jiang Chen took out the C-level genetic vaccine. Recalling the injection procedure, he gently raised her arm and slowly pushed the needle inside her soft skin.

The pain was like an ant sting, making her voice a small shout as her eyebrows tightened. Jiang Chen took a deep breath before carefully pushing the vibrant red liquid into Ayesha's body.

"Done." Relieved, he pressed the prepared cotton swab on her arm and signaled that she could get up. What he didn't understand was why her face had turned so red.

"Within three days, the effects from the vaccine will start to appear. Every morning and night, train in the gym for an hour before going into the training chamber to study. The liquid in there can also enhance your skin and body condition. Once you're submerged in the liquid, don't be anxious as the machine will ensure your breathing. And also..." Jiang Chen couldn't bear to approach the uncomfortable topic coming up.

"Mhmm." Ayesha concentrated on Jiang Chen as she waited for him to finish.

"Ahem." It was too important to be skipped. After a moment's hesitation, Jiang Chen forced himself to say, "After you lie down, the nervous connection system will prompt an option for you to select. When you press initiate, a catheter will be inserted into your body; it might feel odd, just don't move."

In the end, the English words flew rapidly out from his mouth, surprising even himself.

Ayesha's face immediately turned red as she unnaturally grabbed her clothes. In the end, she still obediently nodded.

"Mhmm..."

Soldiers who used the virtual reality chamber could not completely remove the sensation of pain. If they underestimated injuries, their ability to survive would be drastically decreased, so the military's version of the training chamber simulated real wounds as long as it was not over the pain threshold.

The issue then was that when experiencing pain, often due to the intense stimulation, some unexpected consequences would crop up.

Such as excreting waste.

Nobody wanted to stay in nutrient supply polluted by human waste, so these training chambers were designed with excretion systems that solved the users' biological needs.

Due to the unique material of the ergonomic pipes, they would be inserted into the appropriate places. The comfort level differed based on the individual, but it would not hurt so much as feel odd.

After each use, the part inserted into the body was replaced.

The back would be okay, but from the front... Although the body would be secured in place, it would still be dangerous for people to struggle against the process. Sun Jiao had emphasized this point several times before looking mischievously down at his lower body.

Naturally, Jiang Chen had to tell Ayesha, who was about to use the equipment, to prepare her mentally.

But it was embarrassing, especially from guy to a girl.

—

In the gym, Ayesha hesitantly touched the training chamber.

[Pass through there...]

Just thinking about it made Ayesha's face blush from

embarrassment.

It was a necessary biological function.

Her legs felt weak, but she dragged her steps to the training chamber and then stopped.

She took several more deep breaths, which made the outer covering that looked like clear fluids fog up with a fine mist.

She bit her lips as she made up her mind, and then took off her clothes before she carefully stepped into the training chamber.

The chamber closed on her, making her anxiety spike.

Claustrophobic? Unable to move? It was difficult to pinpoint the reason, but Ayesha's usual calm heart kept pounding and pounding.

The nervous system structures connected to the base of her neck and gradually pushed her head backwards. A soothing electric pulse passed through her, and she felt a moveable “mouse” focus on her pupils.

The training chamber was user-friendly and allowed language customization.

She waited for a few more minutes before finally moving the

mouse to the initiate button.

<Initiate.>

The edges of her conscious grew fuzzy, as though she was about to fall asleep. Ayesha relaxed her body. A soft material pressed against her joints as a protection mechanism that would be removed once she entered deep sleep. The level of the nutrient supply in the chamber gently rose, making her feel comfortable. The only part that worried her was the object pressed against her lower body.

The back was okay, but the front...

The tube-like object seemed to be the excretion system Jiang Chen had talked about. Despite her mental preparations, when it began to search like a thread entering a needle, she tensed up again.

It would be okay after a few tries.

Ayesha constantly comforted herself, then made up her mind and chose the <Deep Sleep> button.

Mhmm....

A cold sensation.



Her limbs tensed up in response to the suspense. Ayesha bit her lips hard, trying to ignore that odd feeling.

[It feels weird. This is not right.]

[This feels...]

[Ahhh, no!]

<Warning!>

<Due to the user's excited state, deep sleep mode has been terminated.>

<User, please adjust emotion. Deep sleep mode will be reset in 30 seconds.>

She stared blankly at the warnings on her pupil, regathering her breaths that came in short pants. She felt the odd wetness that left her her completely dumbfounded.

[I just, that can't be... But how...]

# Chapter 72: I Have Only Two Words for You

---

Disregarding Ayesha, who had entered a state of confusion, Jiang Chen brushed his teeth and lied comfortably on the soft bed.

It felt different from sleeping in the mansion.

The elegant chandelier, the calming decorations and wallpaper, and the soft bed that you could almost sink into.

In the 10-square-meter bedroom he previously occupied, either way he rolled, he would hit the wall. But on this enormous bed, two extra inhabitants could easily fit onto it.

Enjoying the luxurious environment, he grabbed his new iPhone 6 and clicked on the cute Little White on the screen to open Wechat.

To be fair, once the trend died down, he switched back to the simple screen function.

Perhaps this was Future 1.0's shortfall? People could download the 53 megabyte app out of curiosity, but once the initial excitement cooled down, people would discover the inconvenience of word commands. For example, speaking to themselves in public could be awkward and playing with the phone in class difficult.

Du Yongkang didn't belong in this era. The program he designed may have been perfect, but it did not match this day and age. Jiang

Chen missed this point as he previously thought having the technological edge alone would be enough, but he forgot that any software must be combined with creativity to be successful. Minecraft was a good example in that although the game was simplistic with pixelated images, the playability was comparable to most triple-A games.

It was by good fortune that Little White managed to fit another demand by coincidence.

A companion that would never betray you, always at your side to comfort and encourage you—and always on your computer.

As an electric pet, Little White would respond with his full attention to whatever was said to him. Any secrets could be shared without worry, and in this technological world where people were growing further apart, burdened by the pressures of life, they often lacked a listener.

If he didn't know that artificial intelligence lacked any true emotion with reactions based on a database, Jiang Chen would gladly chat with this little guy.

But since he knew the underlying secret, it felt strange talking to a lifeless creature.

It still felt more real to speak with a human being.

Just as he was about to chat with Liu Yao, his phone rang.

Unknown number? It was pretty late; perhaps it was a telemarketer again.

But since he didn't have anything better to do, he lazily picked up the phone.

"Hello, who is this?" Slouching, he changed to a more comfortable position.

After a brief silence, a voice finally transmitted from the other caller.

"... It's me. Do you still remember me?" The shy voice made Jiang Chen pause.

[Why does this voice sound so familiar? Who is it?]

Fang Yuanyuan took a deep breath to try and make herself sound more natural.

She had already deleted Jiang Chen's number a long time ago, but when she found out the poor guy who tried to date her had become rich and handsome, even living in a one hundred million RMB mansion, Fang Yuanyuan couldn't sit around any longer.

The arrogance of Xiao Mengying also made her especially disgusted and jealous.

Whenever she thought about Xiao Mengying, she became enraged. The two million bonus slipped out of her hands just like that! The General Manager even praised her multiple times for her impressive sales record at the recognition meeting.

[It should have belonged to me...]

Fang Yuanyuan's enmity made her forget that she was the one who had pushed him away.

It wasn't too late; from Xiao Mengying's words, she could tell that the sl\*t didn't manage to completely "eat" up Jiang Chen. Realizing that she still had a chance, she used all of her efforts to finally get Jiang Chen's phone number from a university classmate.

She even wrote a script.

She planned on using the distressed card to win his sympathy. Then she would hint at her single status, and all because of him...

A cocky smile appeared on her face as Fang Yuanyuan patiently waited for Jiang Chen to take the bait.

"Ummm, sorry, who are you?"

The words that came from the phone frustrated her, making her

curse Jiang Chen's dullness. She adjusted her mentality to sound as if she'd been wronged.

"This, this is Fang Yuanyuan... Have you forgotten me already?"

[Fang Yuanyuan?] Jiang Chen frowned. [Why is this girl calling me? Did I not embarrass her enough?]

He wanted to hang up right away out of annoyance but then smirked at a thought that occurred to him.

After spending too much time with Sun Jiao, he had turned into an evil person as well.

"Oh, Fang Yuanyuan, what's up?" Jiang Chen casually answered.

Using a gentle voice would have the best effect and he was confident that he had the acting skills to pull it off, but he didn't want to waste too much effort on this green tea bit\*h; he was only looking to have some fun.

"Umm, were you sleeping?" Fang Yuanyuan heard Jiang Chen's response and couldn't help but feel delighted.

She could sense an opportunity, but instead of cutting straight to the point, she carefully asked if Jiang Chen was asleep.

"Not yet. Is there anything you need? I'm about to sleep." His

tone lacked any sign of the frustration that he felt.

“Last time... Sorry,” Fang Yuanyuan gently said.

“Oh? What are you referring to?” Jiang Chen responded.

“The last time when you came to buy a house. It’s my fault for misunderstanding you,” Fang Yuanyuan said remorsefully.

Apologizing? Jiang Chen wasn’t so sure anymore.

If she wanted to apologize for her actions, there was nothing he couldn’t forgive since it was not a big deal to begin with. But just as Jiang Chen was about to express his understanding, Fang Yuanyuan continued speaking.

“Do you know? The second you showed up, my heart was beating so fast...”

This sentence almost scared Jiang Chen into flinging his phone away.

[What the fu\*k? What are you trying to act out? A Korean drama? Ewww!]

He resisted the urge to throw up, forcing himself to not hang up and instead listen for the sake of hearing out the entire story.

“I was afraid that you hadn’t forgotten about me. Do you remember? When I rejected you, you were so sad. Watching you in secret, I felt troubled as well, but at the time, I couldn’t be with you.” Fang Yuanyuan masterfully controlled her sorrowful voice as she told the story “sincerely.”

“I really wanted to say yes, but my father didn’t let me, wanting me to marry his friend’s son with whom I was promised to at a young age. I was always resentful of the idea, and in the end, I realized that the person in my heart is—”

“It’s me, right?” Jiang Chen mockingly interrupted.

He couldn’t bear it for a second longer.

Why did she need to find an excuse to be a bit\*h? If she had been straightforward and admitted it, then Jiang Chen wouldn’t have felt this grossed out.

“Yes...” Fang Yuanyuan blanked out. Jiang Chen’s reaction was not what she had expected. His tone made her feel that something was off.

“Not a bad script. If you added a heartfelt cry, perhaps it would match a third-tier Korean drama. But there is one thing I don’t understand. How could someone be so shameless?”

Fang Yuanyuan’s face turned ashen.



“Now that I have money, you regretted your decision and became a gold digger, pulling off this bullsh\*t. You really think I’d fall for this?” Jiang Chen grimly stared at the ceiling as he spoke emotionlessly into the phone.

“You really think I’m only after your money?” The voice was almost whimpering.

[Is it not?] Jiang Chen burst out laughing.

“You rejected me—I don’t blame you. Everyone has the right to say yes or no. I only blame myself for being incompetent, too blind to see the truth. You only used me when you needed me and ignored me when you didn’t. I thought I liked you, but I was too naive.”

A mocking smile curved on Jiang Chen’s face. He remembered that in his first year, he ran through the rain for several kilometers just to give her an umbrella because he thought her sweet smile was worth it.

The reality was that everything had been an act.

His best friend from the same class told him that Fang Yuanyuan already had two boyfriends between first and second year, even getting an abortion for a rich and handsome man. Everything had been hidden away from Jiang Chen at the time since his buddy didn’t have the heart to tell him, afraid of ruining their friendship. But after seeing Jiang Chen’s sorrows after his rejection, the truth came out.

Jiang Chen remembered that he started laughing when he heard it.

At that moment, it no longer seemed to matter.

Who hadn't been hurt by a bit\*h before?

“And now you still expect me to accept you? To care for you like I did before? I only have two words for you—dumb a\*s!” Jiang Chen harshly hung up.

A gloom cast itself over Fang Yuanyuan's face as she bit her lips to the point of turning white. Her eyes were filled with overwhelming shame.

[Is this still the same foolish guy? That's impossible. He rejected me, embarrassed me.]

Hatred, humiliation, and no longer any regret.

Negative emotions began to overwhelm her conscience as if everything was Jiang Chen's fault. She selectively ignored her despicable actions in the past and how awful she had been at Wanhua Real Estate.

A crazy thought occurred to her.

Fang Yuanyuan's finger trembled as she opened her contact list and found a name that made her shiver just by looking at it.

Perhaps the devil erased her conscience; she made up her mind and called that number.

“Oh? Girl, do you miss me?” The flirty tone frustrated Fang Yuanyuan, but she couldn't show the slightest contempt for this man.

“Pervert, I'll tell you something. I have a friend that made some money... No, no, he is clean with no background. I know that guy—he just got lucky.”

Fang Yuanyuan used a coquettish voice that even she was disgusted by. Hearing the confirmation on the other side, a smile bloomed on her face.

After praising some more, Fang Yuanyuan hung up and flung the phone far away. As if drained by the phone call, she leaned against the cold table

Liu Shiqiang, the son of Hongyi Gang's head in Wanghai City, and also the gang prince who had forced her to play with five people.

A shameful tear rolled down Fang Yuanyuan's face, soon twisting into a wicked expression.

“Jiang Chen, you despicable pig. I want to see, with all of your money, if you can mess with the gang.”

# Chapter 73: Career Fair

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Jiang Chen woke up early the next day.

It seemed Ayesha stayed in the training chamber for the entire night but still managed to wake up before he did to make breakfast.

Although he was eager to ask about her opinions on the virtual reality training system, as he opened his mouth, Ayesha's face became a dusk-red.

Hmm? Jiang Chen figured it was better not to ask, so he gave up.

After breakfast, he pestered Ayesha to avoid focusing so much that she forgot her meals before heading down to the garage and driving his luxury Maybach to the company.

When he arrived, Jiang Chen saw that Xia Shiyu was already waiting for him while constantly checking the time. He smiled grimly when saw the thick briefcase.

The girl was too much of a workaholic—the day had just begun.

"You're late by two minutes."

Opening the car door, Xia Shiyu settled into the front passenger seat.

"Ahem, isn't the first sentence supposed to be good morning?" Jiang Chen tried to crack a joke before he started the car.

She put on the seatbelt and after a brief pause, murmured, "Because it is work time."

"Do you take the subway every day? That's too inconvenient. Why don't I give you a car? You have your license, right?" Jiang Chen casually said.

"That wouldn't be good for the company. It has yet to develop a method of stable revenue, and you are already providing benefits to the executives." Xia Shiyu's eyebrows furrowed, her hands clenched on the briefcase as she focused on its button.

"It's okay. It would be too embarrassing for the CEO of a trillion dollar company to have no ride. You don't have to worry about revenue generation; the Future 1.0 functions have yet to be fully unlocked. For example, antivirus, social media platforms, and even replacing the original operating system. Are you still worried about revenue generation?" He smirked confidently.

Drawn by the confident smile, she was immediately shocked by the new information. She abruptly said, "Future 1.0 already has other functions? Why didn't you tell me?"

Her eyes looked accusingly at him, as if he had neglected her.

He did not purposely hide it, just that he had forgotten it in the back of his mind.

"Ahem, of course, it's based on strategic considerations. Future 1.0 can grow right now because we are not in a direct competition with apps under other tech giants. That means we can still work with them given the opportunity."

It was no wonder Xia Shiyu was made to be a CEO; she immediately understood his intention.

Since she didn't need to focus on monetary concerns anymore, the initial stage was focused on reinforcing their place in the market. Once a large enough user base was established, it would take guts to try and shake Future 1.0's position.

Wanghai University.

On the grassy fields stood a stone on which the mighty strokes of ink showed the mark of time on its surface—Wanghai University.

It was rumored that the stone had witnessed the fall of a dynasty and the rise of a republic. It was present during the merciless gunfires and passionate speeches. Not once did it alter itself to fit an era; the only thing that changed were the people passing by.

He watched the countless lively figures, reminiscing about the past.

Truth be told, he never expected to return to his school. He did not leave much of an impact, so at reunions, he would not have much to do.

He could not help but exclaim at the miracle that is life. In just one and a half year's time, he managed to return as the president of Future Technology to hire at his own school, to hire new talents from the place that had taught him.

"Now that I think about it, we are both alumni, so how come you became the manager right away and I became your employee? " Jiang Chen joked around lightheartedly.

Along the way, countless envious looks were directed at Jiang Chen. Of course, he knew it was towards the car, not himself.

A Maybach S600—a decent number of people recognized the price of the car. But the tinted windows blocked the curiosity of the young men and women, leaving them with their imaginations.

To be honest, he enjoyed receiving this sort of envy.

Because when he rode his bicycle down the same road, no one gave him a second look.

"Now the situation has turned around, hasn't it?" Xia Shiyu said mockingly.

She knew Jiang Chen was not the type to hold on to the past, so



she was not sensitive about the topic either.

Jiang Chen didn't disagree, only smiling and enjoying the fulfilment.

It was not long before they entered the parking lot of the library. Under the guidance of the two student union leaders responsible for greeting, they arrived at the event hall.

The hiring fair would start promptly at 9 o'clock, and there was still half an hour left.

"Senior Jiang Chen, I hope you don't make it too difficult for our juniors."

"Of course, but Miss Xia Shiyu will be the one mostly responsible for the hiring," he answered. Jiang Chen had a positive impression of this ponytailed student union leader.

"Many seniors who are applying today are your fans," student union leader Zhang Bingli said as she blinked.

"Oh? My fans?" Jiang Chen sat up, interested.

"Mhmm, especially the seniors in mechanical engineering; they are your juniors."

Jiang Chen forced a smile when he heard it was the mechanical

engineering major. Although it was considered a technical degree, the employment was higher in nearly all other majors. It was not that the major itself was useless, but too many people studied under it, depreciating the major's value.

"Don't be surprised, senior Jiang Chen, but there are a lot of people applying together," the student union leader joked around.

Jiang Chen shrugged as he smiled, indicating that he was more than prepared for it.

Half an hour passed quickly, and the hiring fair officially commenced. Software-related positions were the focus of the morning.

Despite preparing himself, the number of applicants still far exceeded his expectations.

It could only be described as hectic! It was fortunate that the student unions managed to control the situation by using a number system to direct traffic. They also suggested that applicants with later numbers look at other companies first before returning. A temporary fence was then set up around the table's entrance.

Despite these efforts, Jiang Chen continuously received resume after resume.

The new generation of future leaders made up the largest portion

of Future 1.0's user demographics. Therefore, the company had a significant influence on these young individuals who were at the forefront of new ideas.

Everyone saw the potential of the artificial intelligence software. It would not take long for the relatively unknown Future Technology to become the current Tencent or Ali, stunning the domestic industry and eventually the global technology sector.

Even their professor professed that he could not understand the theory behind the artificial intelligence called Little White.

"Hello, Mr. Jiang. I have always looked up to you. I am a computer engineering major."

[You're not even trying when you suck up to me. I was unemployed half a year ago, and you say you've always looked up to me?]

"I am a graduate, with experience as a recognized student governor and performed well within the organization."

[Then why don't you go apply to become a politician? Why are you here?]

"I am a graduate from the software engineering international partnership class. I wish to apply for the program development position. Also, I have a question for you, if you don't mind answering for me. How did Future Technology develop artificial

intelligence? From my understanding, internationally, the best in the field is IBM Watson."

[Am I interviewing you or are you interviewing me? Also, why do you sound like those critics on the internet who always compare Little White to the half-finished Watson?]

However, this was not what gave Jiang Chen the biggest headache.

[If you are a software major and you apply, that's fine, but why are you here if you are a singing major?]

"Assistant? I don't need an assistant right now," Jiang Chen asked in confusion.

The tall, gorgeous beauty smiled mischievously with her vibrant, red lipstick. Ignoring Xia Shiyu and the other interviewing students, she leaned on the table and came closer to Jiang Chen.

"As the president, you will need an assistant. My work will make you truly satisfied."

Afterwards, she shook her cleavage under her V-neck dress at an angle that only he could see. The confident beauty then gently waved her hair and winked at him, a meaning that all men would understand.

Jiang Chen didn't know how she had managed to get in. This was

one of the few times he wanted to focus on work, and he didn't come here to do those things.

Before Xia Shiyu could shoot a despising glance over, Jiang Chen, with a stern face, rejected the girl who obviously wanted to experience the implicit rule. He promptly kicked her out, shock still showing on her face.

[You are funny; am I this easy to get? Do I look like I would want to bang every beauty I see? If you want to seduce me, pick a time without other people around. Ahem.]

These people only made up a small percentage. The majority handed in their resume and explained their technical skills, desired position, understanding of the position, as well as an outlook for the company under three minutes.

As for the awards and certificates, Jiang Chen didn't bother looking those over. One reason was that he had always hated to take tests, and the other was that he didn't believe these papers would bring any quantifiable revenue. A groundbreaking product already existed; the company lacked creativity and insight, not software developers.

Creativity and insight could be discerned in a few sentences.

The students with heavy backpacks all became sorrowful as Jiang Chen shoved their certificates to the side without a glance.

Due to the high number of applicants, he became pickier and more critical.

By noon, the morning interviews had finally ended.

Jiang Chen stretched, glancing at Xia Shiyu who was organizing the resumes. She didn't seem the slightest bit tired.

"How are you not exhausted at all?"

"I am used to it. Only two hours are left in the afternoon, which will focus on legal and marketing positions. There should be fewer applicants." Xia Shiyu organized the papers as she pushed up her glasses.

Lunch was provided by the school cafeteria free of charge. The school generously donated their services for the corporations participating in the hiring fair. The student union members from before worked tirelessly to put the steaming meals in front of the hiring managers.

Jiang Chen, who was already hungry, began to devour the meal that tasted familiar. Xia Shiyu, on the other hand, ate with grace and elegance, yet still managed to finish the lunch quickly to continue scanning through the resumes.

"Coffee." Jiang Chen brought two cups of coffee over, casually placing one at the corner of her table.

Xia Shiyu paused before burying her head to resume staring at the resume.

"Tha... thank you."

Jiang Chen laughed to acknowledge it was not a big deal. He then leaned against the chair and closed his eyes.

What he didn't notice was that because of his casual act, someone stared blankly at a word for ten minutes straight without realizing.

## Chapter 74: Alumni Dinner

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Due to the reduced number of applicants in the afternoon, the two combined their tables to conduct interviews together.

“My name is Chen Lulu, graduating from law at Wanghai University. I’m here to apply for the legal assistant role at your company because I’m a loyal fan of Little White.”

The girl who was being interviewed articulated her story clearly with a bright smile on her face.

A fan of Little White? That sort of reason was a first.

Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows since it was the first interesting response he had heard that day after all of the “I believe in the future prospects of the company” and “I view the artificial intelligence market with optimism.”

"Oh? So why don't you tell me the first thing you are going to do as a legal assistant at our company?"

"Of course I am going to sue those copycats." Chen Lulu answered without hesitation.

Jiang Chen laughed at the response.

But though it was a fun answer and caught his attention, it was



too emotional; he wanted to hear a more sophisticated answer. The legal field had no room for ambiguity.

Jiang Chen didn't have much experience as an interviewer, but he had at least experienced the process enough. He had read up on interview tip books that gave clues in selecting the right candidate.

Just as Jiang Chen was about to pass on her, Chen Lulu opened her mouth again.

She briefly explained from a legal perspective the advantages Future Technology held: the rights of the software in the market that currently infringed upon Future Technology's copyright, the basis of their claims, and even how to fight the lawsuits. She explained the steps and procedures clearly and logically enough that even Jiang Chen, who was unclear on legal matters, was able to understand most of it.

She then moved on to explain her opinions on the legal weaknesses within Future Technology's current system. Since Xia Shiyu's talent focused mainly on operations, she missed key points on the legal side. Though it did not have a large impact as of now, once the ball got rolling, those legal implications would become a hindrance to the company's growth.

Clear, concise, logical, and articulate.

Talent! A real talent!

Jiang Chen peeked at Xia Shiyu, and when he saw that she had a similarly impressed expression, he stood up.

"Congratulations, Miss Chen Lulu. If you don't have any other questions regarding salary and benefits, you can start tomorrow." With a smile on his face, Jiang Chen extended his right hand.

"No problem! Hehe. YEAH!" Chen Lulu shook Jiang Chen's hand excitedly before she practically floated out the door.

A base salary of 4,000 was above average for the graduating class. What could she possibly be unhappy about, especially given the future growth potential of Future Technology? It could only increase from now on.

The fading enthusiastic cheers made Jiang Chen smile.

"This Chen Lulu's ability is quite exceptional, although a bit overzealous in personality." Xia Shiyu gave her impressions after giving it some thought.

"It's okay to have personality as long as she gets the job done! This is our Future Technology's work culture. Of course, she still needs your mentoring." Jiang Chen laughed as he packed away Chen Lulu's resume.

Although they already decided on the candidate, they finished the procedures for the others. This was first to show respect for the applicants and second to make sure they had not missed an

exceptional person. No one would reject talent; given their company's trajectory, it wouldn't hurt to have another legal assistant.

In the end, however, Jiang Chen was disappointed to see that no one came close to Chen Lulu.

The only saving grace was finding a few interesting talents for marketing. After organizing the resumes with Xia Shiyu, they concluded the hiring session.

—

In the evening was a banquet hosted by the university. It was an act of appreciation for the corporations that participated in the hiring fair.

On the other hand, the majority of the firms had a form of connection to Wanghai University, such as having an alumni who had created the company. Therefore, this meeting served as a platform for sharing knowledge and establishing connections. If this banquet managed to help in fostering a deal, it would increase the value of the university in society.

Xia Shiyu did not enjoy such gatherings, so she headed back, preferring to select candidates fit for open positions. This disappointed Jiang Chen slightly, but he didn't insist.

[This girl is working so hard. Perhaps it's time to give her a

raise?]

He thought to himself as he watched Xia Shiyu leave.

Because the majority of the corporations were still in the start-up phase, their operations differed substantially. Among these companies, the bright star at the center of attention was Future Technology. Not many companies could draw such significant publicity in the initial stages.

What shocked many, however, was that the rising star of this new tech company was only a 23-year-old recent graduate from the university. The student recruiting office had already begun to consider potential advertisements for the next school year despite the semester just starting.

Without a doubt, Jiang Chen would be the poster child, displayed as a distinguished and successful businessman and alumnus.

After the principal's opening remarks, people already began to approach him before the student representative had a chance to announce the start of the banquet.

People were greeting and flattering; some wanted to establish a connection but most pulled up the topic of a partnership.

The "distinguished alumni" who were looked up to by the juniors were not so well off.

Not every start-up company made money. This became evident looking at the sparse cars parked in the parking lot. Many

presidents were too poor to afford a car; in fact, the people working for major corporations were most likely better off financially.

Regardless, having their own companies was worthy of praise. A low period didn't mean too much in the long-run, which was why all of the founders continued to persist.

Jiang Chen accepted the greetings, but to the proposed partnerships, he gave a chuckle and a show of consideration before he turned them all down.

The reason for his laughter was that some of these proposals were comical.

For example, an alumnus who had graduated two years after him was operating a decent-sized clothing plant. He first introduced an idea pushed by the government called "Web+," then steered the conversation towards a potential partnership after some flattering words.

As for how the partnership would go? It would be called Web+clothes.

He went on to talk about producing merchandise using Little White as a platform for e-commerce.

Jiang Chen initially displayed interest as it was not a bad idea. He then asked about the current plant and production capacity, which

led to the guy scratching his head as he awkwardly revealed that they had recently received the loan and that the plant was still undergoing construction.

[If I can't even see it, what's the whole point of this conversation?]

But that was not the funniest one.

A software service company with some success had the audacity to do an equity swap to form a "win-win" partnership and push Future 1.0 to the world.

[It's an excellent plan, but why would I need your company? I can do that by myself!]

Jiang Chen rejected him right away, but the guy refused to give up. He shamelessly pushed his business card at Jiang Chen before asking him to carefully consider the idea as it would be a monumental partnership for both companies.

[He clearly didn't eat his medicine before he left his house.]

But out of respect, Jiang Chen accepted the card.

All in all, the banquet mood remained cheerful all throughout. The theater students performed creative plays to demonstrate their acting talent to the graduated class. Some of the performances were on par with those of professional celebrities;

Wanghai University was indeed a breeding ground for talent.

At the banquet, Jiang Chen was happy to meet his mentor Zhang Peng who had taken care of him in the past.

They had a few drinks like they used to before the mentor, who had no alcohol tolerance, started to spill out his difficulties.

"The graduating class this year is giving me a headache. Every year, we battle to get from last place to first place in employment percentage. They all ask me for advice—what advice can I give? This is the job market. I even founded a mechanics shop, but what can I even do? Jiang Chen, why didn't you create a mechanical production company? I can't even beg you to hire some people with a tech company." Zhang Peng drunkenly held his cup as he looked at Jiang Chen with a mock-begrudging look.

"Ahem, you are drunk." Jiang Chen felt sad to see his mentor act like this. Zhang Peng used his efforts to find him a job back when he was unemployed and no one thought him a talent.

Although he felt compassion for his teacher's situation, there was nothing he could do besides comfort him a bit more.

"I am not drunk. I can still drink." Zhang Peng reached for the bottle.

Of course, no one allowed him to drink any more. Jiang Chen helped him to the washroom to allow him to puke before

leaving.

Just as he passed a table, a familiar voice called out by his ear.

"It's you?"

Looking at the girl in front of him with long hair and light makeup, Jiang Chen was confused since he couldn't recall who this person was.

"Who are you?"

"Pshh, that day in the hospital." The girl covered her mouth.

"Oh, you are Wang Xinran?" Jiang Chen suddenly realized.

"Yes, why? You can't recognize me with makeup?" Wang Xinran asked jokingly.

"Ahem, yes, a little bit." Jiang Chen smiled apologetically. He took a close look at this lively girl, unable to match his impression of her from last time.

Wang Xinran's eyes flashed slyly as she circled around observing Jiang Chen. "I didn't imagine Jiang Chen and the Jiang Chen from last time were the same person."



Jiang Chen shrugged, not knowing how to respond. "What do you mean? Jiang Chen and Jiang Chen are the same person. My name has always been Jiang Chen to begin with."

"Hehe, I was just curious. Don't mind me." Wang Xinran stared at Jiang Chen before asking, "Can you satisfy my curiosity, Senior Jiang Chen, a genius who cured rabies and introduced artificial intelligence?"

"It depends on what you are curious about." Jiang Chen didn't disagree but he became more alert, wondering if it was her or her father's curiosity. If it was from her father, then he had to be cautious.

"Pshh." Wang Xinran suddenly burst out in laughter, which confused Jiang Chen since he didn't know what was so funny.

"Don't worry, I'm not trying to ferret out your trade secret. I'm acting as the producer of our school news to interview our distinguished alumni. I hope you don't mind." Wang Xinran blinked cutely.

"Of course not." Relieved, Jiang Chen agreed happily.

"Then let's start. First, your university life." Wang Xinran produced a notepad out of thin air and began to ask her questions.

Because it was not relevant information, Jiang Chen answered casually. The interview lasted for fifteen minutes before Wang

Xinran ran away, leaving Jiang Chen where he stood.

Suddenly, however, she stopped halfway before turning around.

"Oh, my father wants to see you, so please pick a time to meet him. He is getting old, and this has been on his mind...."

"Okay, no problem. What else?" Jiang Chen forced a smile.

"Hehe, that's it. Oh, give me your phone number."

Jiang Chen rolled his eyes, writing his phone number down on her notepad to finally get rid of this overly energetic girl that he could not seem to say no to.

As for her father's position, he had already investigated into it. There were plenty of influential people in Wanghai City, but there were only a few major ones at the top—the only one among these with the last name Wang was the General Secretary Wang Dehai.

Jiang Chen held a cautious attitude towards meeting this influential politician, but he had no valid reason to say no. A general secretary held authority in the central government.

Regardless, for Future Technology, Wang Dehai's attitude was crucial.

Jiang Chen didn't need to do much as Future Technology alone

could grow without government assistance.

As long as they didn't cause trouble for him, it was more than enough.

# Chapter 75: Because of Regret?

Translator: Min Editor: - -

The banquet concluded with thunderous applause accompanying the school management's closing remarks. Jiang Chen dragged his slightly intoxicated body to his car before stopping in his tracks.

[Fu\*k, how can I drive if I drank? This is going to be a problem.]

A troubled smile appeared on his face. Although his body condition was stronger than an ordinary person's, enabling him to cleanse alcohol from his system at a faster rate, he was not like the masters in wuxia novels who could instantly dissipate the alcohol from their bodies. The police would find it hard to believe that he was not drunk.

Key in hand, he hesitated, not knowing if he should take the chance. In the end, he sighed.

He grabbed his phone and slid his finger across the screen but didn't who to call.

Xia Shiyu just headed home; it would be inconsiderate to call her back.

Liu Yao?

When he saw that name, his finger paused before he pressed it

without further thought.

"Hello?" From the other end, a slightly lazy voice sounded, as if the speaker had been about to fall asleep.

He pondered for a moment before opening his mouth. "It's me."

"Jiang Chen?!" came the ecstatic response.

"You have caller ID, right? Hmm, where are you right now?"

She was lying face-down on her bed, her smooth legs swinging back and forth in the air. A smile crept onto her face as she propped her chin up with her hand. "I'm home, why? Do you miss me?"

It was the first time Jiang Chen had called her.

Jiang Chen was silent, not knowing how to answer. In the end, he awkwardly chose to ignore the question.

"How far away is your home from Wanghai University?"

Liu Yao pouted with disappointment.

"Not that far. Two subway stations away."

"Ahem, I drank a bit and can't drive. Could you come and pick me up? I'm by the lake in Wanghai University," Jiang Chen said shamelessly.

—

The pristine moon cast its light from the night sky and reflected off the glowing lake's surface. A light breeze drifted by the lakeside, rattling the leaves to the sound of the wind. The September air already carried a slight bite.

He embraced the chill on his arms as he leaned against the marble fence, staring blankly at the hut sitting in the middle of the lake.

When was the last time he had visited this place?

Behind him was the English corner and a bench in a grassy field—an ideal place to practice recitations.

But it was also the perfect date spot, referred to by students as the Lovers' Hill.

"What are you looking at?"

"Zoning out." Jiang Chen turned around smiling but stalled, stunned by the glimpse of a beauty.

A white dress paired with high-heeled sandals—the pure white color....

As soon as he managed to regather his thoughts, he said sounding troubled, "If people didn't know better, they'd think you a first-year student."

The slight curvature of her lips showed a girl's pride while the gorgeous face under the lamppost carried a hint of innocence.

[Did I drink too much?]

Jiang Chen rubbed at his temple.

"Of course. I even met a senior when I was walking over, and he volunteered to walk me home." Liu Yao examined Jiang Chen's face with a smile.

"Oh."

Dissatisfied with Jiang Chen's calm reaction, she asked, "Are you not jealous?"

Jiang Chen smiled, his eyes locked onto the gaze as limpid as the lake's surface.

The words of "Why would I be jealous" were stuck in his throat.

"Perhaps, a little."

He turned away from the attractive face to look at the grass field dotted with bright lights.

Liu Yao's smile grew larger, her mouth shaping into a crescent.

"Then I told him, I already have a boyfriend, and he walked away blushing."

Jiang Chen shrugged, chuckling. "Why are you so direct? They didn't even say that they were going to chase after you."

"The way he looked at me said it all. But I can't accept anyone other than you."

He fell into silence, which was soon broken.

"Do you want to be my boyfriend?"

"While we're on the topic, did you purposely dress like this?" Jiang Chen diverted the topic with a troubled smile.

The pristine white dress, the gorgeous face without makeup, and the eyes as bright as the stars in the summer night.

Liu Yao also didn't answer the question as she straightened her



back and strolled around the rock path.

She turned to look at him with a gentle smile, her dress blooming with her motions.

"Am I similar to that girl who watched the movie with you?"

He fell silent, then started laughing hysterically. Perhaps it was due to the alcohol's influence.

"She is not a good person, so why are you copying her?" Jiang Chen also straightened up from leaning against the fence, his laughter dying away.

"Am I like the girl in your imagination?"

Jiang Chen stopped again, and after a while, spoke with confusion, "Is there a difference?"

Just as he finished speaking, he already had an answer in his heart.

The girl in his imagination was pure, innocent, and adorable. In the end, he realized that everything had been a facade, but he still held feelings for Fang Yuanyuan.

Liu Yao smiled, looking at Jiang Chen. Although she didn't know the girl he met in the past, she could guess. So with her cunning,

she changed into a dress she had worn back in her university days.

"Like a traveler in the desert, heading to the imaginary kingdom, strolling alone," he murmured as he gazed at the loving couple on the faraway grass field.

"Pshhh, you can write poems?"

"No. Just the complaints of a bored person at a boring time."

For some reason, he missed Sun Jiao, that evil and naughty girl.

Perhaps, this was why he liked her?

The courage to love and hate, the straightforward way of expressing her emotions, and the naughtiness to act on the "wrong" ideas. She was becoming more civil, but Jiang Chen had the urge to tell her that "this was okay too," because such a girl was nearly extinct in this world.

Here, what remained genuine?

Suddenly, a softness gently blocked his mouth, his eyes staring at a closed pair of eyes.

Lips parted.

Silence ensued before Jiang Chen eventually asked, "Can I ask you a question?"

"Mhmm."

"Apart from material needs, why do you like me?"

If it was just about money, there were plenty of rich people.

A delighted smile blossomed on her face. "Maybe because of respect."

The smile was beautiful, but also helpless.

"I see."

Perhaps she sought after respect because she was not respected?

He paused, and after thinking awhile, asked, "Do you know why I accepted your invitation for a vacation?"

"Because of regret?"

Jiang Chen looked down. He didn't say no, or yes.

"Take me home."

Liu Yao looked slightly disappointed, but she smiled and nodded.

"Mhmm."

—

He leaned back against the soft passenger seat and let out a long sigh. He then pulled at the collar that made him feel stuffy.

"Mingxin Area Mansion Community, the innermost plot. Do you know the way?"

"There's always GPS." Liu Yao forced a smile as she really hadn't been to that area before.

Jiang Chen watched silently as she started the GPS and set the destination before he settled in to rest.

The car ride was smooth with Liu Yao increasing the speed once they left campus grounds. He opened his eyes, catching the colors of the city in his peripheral vision. Suddenly, he casually asked, "How have you been doing?"

"Not well." Liu Yao steered as she pouted.

"Oh? Why?"

"Because the movie someone promised has still yet to happen."  
Her voice sounded forlorn.

"Hehe, how much money?" Intoxicated, he smiled carelessly.

Screech!

The car suddenly stopped.

Liu Yao parked the car on the side of the road, took off her seatbelt, and looked him straight in the eye.

In her eyes... were tears?

"What's wrong?" he asked with a bitter smile.

"In your eyes, I'm just a sl\*t, right?"

Jiang Chen blanked. He didn't expect one sentence would cause her to react this dramatically.

"Do you remember the lover lock at the edge of the sea?"

His throat slightly moved as he looked away, not knowing what to say. Of course he remembered. He engraved the name Chen Lele, the pure and happy girl that existed only in a movie.

"I can't become your Chen Lele?"

"But you're not..."

"I am."

His lips were stopped by a soothing sensation.

The seat belt was unbuckled as he reached out to hug the lithe figure.

He was no longer drunk from the alcohol, but he was somehow more intoxicated.

It was already ten o'clock at night, and the streets were empty with an occasional car that screeched by.

Maybachs had excellent noise cancellation, insulating the noises from passing through to the outside. The tinted windows also obstructed the view into the car, making it impossible for the occasional passerby to see into the car.

He tightly hugged Liu Yao, smelling the fragrance of her hair and listening to her suppressed moans as he allowed the alcohol-induced sweat to roll down.

Perhaps intoxication was contagious?

Or perhaps it was only the idea of being intoxicated.

No need to think.

Even as autumn was about to take summer's place, spring blossomed inside the car.

# Chapter 76: Negotiation with 361

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The car slowly drove into the mansion grounds.

Ayesha stood quietly by the door and watched Jiang Chen's car come to a stop.

The door opened, accompanied by a flash of the car lights before a woman stepped out. She was beautiful, her aesthetics matching her husband's.

Was it Sun Jiao or Yao Yao? Her instincts told her that the answer was neither.

There was not the slightest dissatisfaction in Ayesha's mind. In her country, polygamy was not uncommon. The number of women with Jiang Chen had nothing to do with how she served him.

"Are you still waiting for me? You really don't have to wait at the door." Jiang Chen also got out of the car with a distressed look.

He did just...

He felt it was unfair to the girl who had been lingering here.

On the drive back, Liu Yao explained her situation to him. Her ex-boyfriend, who had been her agent at the time, forced her to



find "options" in Sanya, and that was how she had met Jiang Chen...

Perhaps because of her honesty, Jiang Chen no longer minded the incident as much as he had before.

Through this, he learned that she did not lack self-respect; rather, she had only met the wrong guy.

After that, they came to a tacit understanding.

So could she now be considered a mistress?

That word had a strange attraction that made Jiang Chen's heart pump.

Ayesha drove the car into the garage while Jiang Chen took Liu Yao into the mansion.

"Just find a bedroom to sleep in."

"I want to sleep where you sleep," Liu Yao cutely pleaded as she cheerfully held on to his arm.

"Ahem, I have things to do tomorrow. Sleep well."

If they ended up sleeping together, he would never be able to get

up in the morning.

A thought occurred to him, and he asked, "Oh, do you still contact your ex-boyfriend... agent?"

"No, no, I already deleted that waste of air's number," she said carefully with her eyes on his. She was afraid he would have other thoughts.

"Oh." He felt as if a large burden had been lifted from his chest.

But if she did have a conflict with her agent, her income would be a problem.

"Before the year ends, once I finish everything on hand, I'll take care of your problems."

A living expense of one hundred thousand should be more than enough. The cost of breaching the contract was most likely around one million. To Liu Yao, it was an astronomical number, but to him, it was pocket change.

As for the movie, production costs would be anywhere in the ten million. With Liu Yao's acting skills and looks, as long as there was enough money invested, popularity wasn't an issue. In this case, making a return would not be difficult at all.

"Mhmm!" Liu Yao cheerfully shook Jiang Chen's arm.

"Also, I am a very possessive person. If you...."

"What are you thinking? I'm already yours." Liu Yao mock-angrily pinched him on the waist.

Jiang Chen saw the raised corners of her lips and laughed aloud.

The her now, he didn't mind.

—

The next morning, Jiang Chen drove Liu Yao back to her home despite her wishes to stay in the mansion. He still had many secrets, and it would be inconvenient if Liu Yao were to see something.

Thankfully, Liu Yao didn't insist on it since she knew her boundaries.

Afterward, Jiang Chen drove to Future Technology. There was an important meeting waiting for him.

"Hello, Mr. Jiang."

"Hello, Mr. Zhang." Jiang Chen shook Zhang Jianfeng's hand before inviting him to take a seat.

A clean haircut, a well-tailored suit—he had the sharpness of a company executive. An austere assistant who was responsible for the meeting minutes stood behind him.

Jiang Chen had already read into his background; he was the 361 Phone Helper Project Manager who was responsible for negotiating the use of Future 1.0 on the 361 software platform. This man was most likely the best person for this conversation since 361 held Jiang Chen in high esteem.

Of course, this was only to the current Future Technology.

"Mr. Jiang, I'm sure you know that I'm the project manager for the 361 Phone Helper. Our team members have come to a consensus that if Future 1.0 were to be released on our platform, it would possess many high-quality, creative traits and increased functionality compared to the majority of the apps available today."

Zhang Jianfeng's tone then took a turn in the opposite direction.

"However, despite the excellent design of the artificial intelligence, I don't know if Mr. Jiang has already considered the security of the software. What if hackers infiltrated Little White's programming and accessed personal user information such as bank passwords? Have you considered the consequences of this?"

Jiang Chen calmly waited for Zhang Jianfeng to finish before he responded with a collected smile, "As to security, our company has

already released a statement. For any financial losses related to Little White's security, our response is to fully compensate the users. Fortunately, the current amount is zero."

Impressed by Jiang Chen's performance, Xia Shiyu, who sat beside Jiang Chen, nodded. She'd been worried about Jiang Chen's professionalism at the negotiation table, but now she realized she had clearly worried too much.

[In critical moments, this guy is surprisingly reliable.]

"You're right. At this time, Future 1.0 has yet to be a target for hackers. But it's impossible for Mr. Jiang to be completely confident in your program, correct? I understand that in information security, your company's talent is still zero," Zhang Jianfeng also responded with a smile.

"Oh? Looks like you've done your research. But I would also imagine that you would've taken a close look at our software as well. Did your experts have anything to say?" He hinted at other meanings of his words, but Jiang Chen maintained his smile, even making it more cheerful than Zhang Jianfeng's.

Zhang Jianfeng's pupils slightly contracted, and he responded with an awkward smile.

"Taking a look" and copying was not uncommon in this industry, but it was never mentioned outright. You say I'm copying? I think you're mistaken. You're called Counterstrike, I'm Crossfire. The names are different; how could this be considered copying?

However, it certainly did feel awkward to have their failed attempts to crack the software pointed out directly by Jiang Chen.

"Ahem, I hope there's no confusion or misunderstanding about this. My company did try and gain an understanding of Future 1.0, but it was all within the legal boundaries. We have an obligation to ensure security for our 361 Phone Helper users. If the users downloaded a software with a backdoor in the programming, it would damage our own reputation."

Shameless, how shameless!

Jiang Chen wanted to jump up, whip out his phone and shove it into this man's face, asking how this list of garbage software in their 361 software market was evidence of their consideration for the users. Zhang Jianfeng had the audacity to say that they worried about user security when Little White's software was safer than their own antivirus program. Therefore, out of concern for their user security, they were going to crack Little White?

At the same time, Zhang Jianfeng was mentally cursing Gu Chen for his uselessness.

[He had a full staff of "masters of computers" and even created a separate project for this. After working day in and day out and being pounded with work, when asked if he had made any progress, he got annoyed and told daddy that he didn't know? How the fu\*ck do I negotiate when I don't even know the chips on our table?]

Even as he raged inside his mind, he couldn't show any of it at the negotiation. He slowly took a sip of tea.

Seeing Jiang Chen remain silent, he began to test the waters.

"Of course, while screening the security of Future 1.0, we did make some progress. At this early stage, we can conclude that the software is safe."

Although he phrased it as a screening, everyone knew the truth—it was cracking.

Zhang Jianfeng carefully observed Jiang Chen's reaction to his blatant lie, hoping to see a flash of uncertainty on his face.

Something was fishy! Xia Shiyu immediately realized the lie in Zhang Jianfeng's words and turned to look at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen sneered and responded, "Oh? Since your company already made some progress, then why are you guys here?"

Even without Xia Shiyu's hints, Jiang Chen had already realized the fundamental problem.

[If you cracked the software, then why are you coming to me? You can just create an advanced Future 1.0. Do you need to ask my permission to copy it?]

"What you say is true, but we still hope your company will proactively provide the necessary information so that we can conduct a full safety analysis. Of course, we are also interested in some of the creative elements of your software. If Mr. Jiang doesn't mind, we can discuss the price so that we can have a joint victory on both sides."

"Please enlighten me on how we would win together with this logic?" Jiang Chen interrupted Zhang Jianfeng without the slightest consideration. It was considered rude behavior, but since Zhang Jianfeng had the audacity to say his spiel, Jiang Chen was thoroughly fed up with it.

Shocked, Zhang Jianfeng stared at Jiang Chen. He hadn't expected Jiang Chen to effectively end the negotiations.

"Are you not interested in the price?" Zhang Jianfeng was a skilled negotiator, able to hide his anger. Instead, he smiled genially at Jiang Chen.

"Well, we can talk about it."

"One billion." Zhang Jianfeng calmly gave the conservative figure.

"As someone with a tech background, do you really believe that it's worth only one billion?" Jiang Chen sipped his tea as he leaned back against the chair.



"Mr. Jiang, although the technology is a part of it, you and I are both in the business field. Don't you think that we should talk about the business value? From my understanding, you don't even have a channel of revenue from this free software. I would have to say that your financial statement for this month shouldn't look too great." Zhang Jianfeng couldn't hold in his laughter.

"We have sufficient funds; you don't have to worry about that. As for revenue generation? If you're looking forward to it so much, it may come to exist tomorrow." A smile full of hidden meanings appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

Zhang Jianfeng took a moment to think. Based on what he knew, Jiang Chen's company only had half a million of invested capital. Could a venture capital have already invested in them?

Zhang Jianfeng couldn't be blamed for his lack of information. The registered capital was indeed half a million, but the following equity infusion was not released to the public. As a privately-held company, the information would not be disclosed, and therefore, they had no obligation to give information on their assets.

"Since Mr. Jiang is so confident, I don't think there is much more we can talk about." Zhang Jianfeng sighed as he stood up.

The negotiation fell through, though it was a result he had expected.

"What you say is correct. If your company genuinely wishes to

form a partnership with us, please provide us with a reasonable proposal, and we will reciprocate with the same respect." Xia Shiyu, who hadn't spoken until now, nudged her glasses up as she slid a document forward. "This outlines the potential area we would consider forming a partnership with. If Mr. Zhang is interested, you should take it with you."

Zhang Jianfeng was caught off guard, but he soon regathered his thoughts.

[Is this how a small startup treats large corporations? Future Technology is this confident?]

He picked up the piece of paper.

[Virus database sharing? Phone security partnership? Hehe, arrogant.]

The next second, however, he felt something he had never felt before—it was a hint of fear. What if they did have the ability?

Artificial intelligence plus an antivirus?

There were countless possibilities.

What else could artificial intelligence do?

"Since the negotiation has fallen through, could I ask for your

evaluation of Future 1.0? This way, I can go back and give my boss an answer," Zhang Jianfeng casually asked as he placed the document into his briefcase.

"From a programmer's perspective, what do you think a finished artificial intelligence would be worth?" Instead of answering, Jiang Chen half-jokingly threw the question back at him.

Zhang Jianfeng considered it for a moment before he smiled and said, "One trillion?"

"Hahaha, around that range. Except, even for one trillion, I wouldn't sell it." Jiang Chen laughed as he walked beside Zhang Jianfeng. "Do you want to work for me? I'll cover the cost of breaching your contract."

Zhang Jianfeng laughed jovially.

"That's an interesting way of acquiring talent."

[I haven't even asked if you're interested in coming to 361, and you already ask me to come work for you?]

Zhang Jianfeng's mouth twitched on his way to the door.

For a brief second, he had been tempted.

Before he achieved his current position, he began as a

programmer. Witnessing the impeccable technology behind the software, how could he not be tempted?

Except temptation didn't necessarily translate into actions.

—

Upon returning to 361's headquarters, Zhang Jianfeng reported the day's events in its entirety to the president, Zhou Hongwei.

"One trillion? Haha, I wouldn't sell it for one trillion?"

"Looks like the president holds high regards for Future Technology?" he lightly asked Zhou Hongwei upon seeing that he did not criticize him for his inability to close the deal.

"High? High is an understatement." Zhou Hongwei shook his head as he laughed. "If any one of you could develop artificial intelligence, what if I gave him ten percent equity?"

10% equity! Zhang Jianfeng uncontrollably gulped.

361 was listed in the United States. With an average share price of 60 USD, the current market cap already reached an astounding ten billion USD! Ten percent was equal to one billion USD.

The assistant also gulped with wide eyes.

"Looks like it's impossible to acquire them." Zhou Hongwei shook his head sighing.

"How about we do something with our platform instead?" the assistant suggested.

Zhou Hongwei glanced at her before chuckling.

"If Future 1.0 can't be downloaded from 361, won't users just download it from the android market? And if the android market doesn't work, why wouldn't they just make an official site?"

The assistant was speechless.

"Why don't we wait first and see Microsoft's opinion?" Frowning, Zhang Jianfeng put forth his own suggestion.

Zhou Hongwei considered it for a moment, then nodded.

"That's what I had planned to do. It's a much more conservative approach."

It was no secret that Microsoft and 361 had an alliance. When 361 fought for market shares with Tencent, it was all under the orders of Microsoft from across the Pacific Ocean. If they didn't have such a strong backer, there was no way Zhou Hongwei would have had the guts to fight the number one giant in the Chinese tech industry. Compared to Tencent, who possessed half of the tech field, 361 was too weak. On that day, the number of MSN

installations increased to seven million, revealing the true instigator behind the scenes.

Zhou Hongwei could choose to blacklist Future 1.0 using 361's antivirus and suppress its ability to thrive. Currently, 361 did possess high market shares on the mobile platform. Even if they were faced with a lawsuit, the settling amount would be negligible.

Three hundred thousand? That was nothing.

His real concern was whether this move would push Future Technology to other tech giants such as Tencent or Baidu.

Then it would become even more difficult for 361 to survive.

All tech giants shared the same concern.

Everyone understood the value of artificial intelligence; however, if they were too forceful in pushing it away, it would only hurt them in the end.

The best way was to balance power through a partnership. At least for now, Future 1.0 had yet to touch anyone else's cake yet. It was because of this that Jiang Chen restrained himself from releasing all of Little White's functions.

If Little White suddenly possessed all of the functions of QQ, Baidu, and 361 together, it would face the backlash of the entire internet industry as he would have just touched everyone's cake.

(Translator note: Hello everyone, this is Min. I apologize for the unstable update for the past while. We were transitioning into a new system and finally completed the process. I'll be releasing 7 chapters in the next 24 hours as my apology. Please comment and let me know how I can improve the book!)

# Chapter 77: Press Conference

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[Suit does not feel comfortable at all.]

Jiang Chen remembered wearing it only once during his graduation debate and a couple times in interviews.

But looking at Xia Shiyu in her black office attire, she certainly possessed the professional and sharp vibe. Her silky, black hair was tied up and her black-framed glasses were perched pertly on her nose. On her face, she put on light, natural makeup. To be honest, he previously thought that she looked bad with a ponytail, but now she seemed more mature and professional.

"Are you ready?" Xia Shiyu was anxious upon seeing his casual demeanor.

Jiang Chen shrugged and smiled. "Don't worry."

That certainly did not make her any less worried...

Although Xia Shiyu wanted to make fun of him, she did feel calmer with a composed Jiang Chen as opposed to a nervous one.

She let out a breath and nodded.

"You can do it."



"Of course." He confidently smiled.

[What's so scary about being in front of cameras? I was in front of god knows how many guns. Ummm, not exactly something to be proud of.]

—

On the first floor of Future Technology was a public conference hall bustling with people.

The conference room had an elevated half-circle in which the invited press had all taken their seats. As usual, the cameras were placed in the back, and because seatings were numbered, the hall was not too chaotic.

The media frenzy surrounding Future 1.0 exceeded Jiang Chen's expectations. The 100-square-meter conference room still felt crowded.

The curtain slid open, commencing the start of the flashing lights.

With a bright smile, Jiang Chen waved his hand, his heart pounding as he noticed the CTV, CNN, and BBC symbols.

[Damn, it does feel different now that cameras are pointing at me. I'm even feeling nervous now.]

After collecting his thoughts, he read the opening address amidst the media's heightened expectations.

"First, I would like to thank the media present for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend Future Technology's press conference. I believe everyone seated here has already had the chance to learn about Future 1.0. To save time, I won't go over each of the functions.

"The purpose of this press conference is to address and answer any rumors or misunderstandings about Future 1.0. Therefore, the most efficient method is for me to give the time to the media. Please, following the sequence of seat numbers, ask your questions, and limit them to one per person to ensure that every outlet has an opportunity."

Xia Shiyu, who was standing backstage, almost fell down as she was dumbfounded by Jiang Chen's decision.

[Who would pass the questioning to the media right away without saying anything first?]

[Without giving a simple, comprehensive explanation, if they come to ask an extremely tricky question, would you be able to handle it?]

The media was also shocked that Jiang Chen skipped right into the media's questions without playing his role first. It certainly caught them off guard. They'd seen press conferences without a

question and answer session before, but never one without a speech.

Also, questions were based on seat number, which made them feel uncomfortable as they were used to having to fight to ask questions.

But Jiang Chen didn't concern himself with the rules, instead choosing the most efficient method. If he had to pick people, he ran the risk of offending certain individuals, so the best way was to create boundaries and make people ask one by one.

The reporters who usually had to have their hands up for an entire conference without getting picked were certainly appreciative of Jiang Chen's decision. It didn't matter that they were seated in the back so long as they had the opportunity to ask questions.

Jiang Chen kept his composure. He had his own considerations in making this decision.

[Ultimately, you guys will be asking about security and privacy anyways. Even if I clarify first, you'll only pick holes in my word choice. If I let you ask beforehand, I only need to answer.]

After weighing himself internally, Jiang Chen knew that he would not be able to outwit these veterans. Regardless of Xia Shiyu's competency, her script would be picked apart by these reporters who were hungry for headlines.

Although they were surprised by Jiang Chen's decision, the reporters had already done their research beforehand and came prepared with a list of questions. The reporter in the first seat stood up and read out what was written on his notepad.

"I am CTV's reporter. There has been controversy surrounding the topic of artificial intelligence security, especially Little White's. Mr. Jiang Chen, could he really be a ticking time bomb in the user's phone concerning private information like people said he would be?" the young man clearly articulated.

"That's a great question. First, I'll have to refer back to the guarantee our company has made recently. If the user suffers any financial loss as a result of a program error in Little White, we'll fully compensate the user." Jiang Chen shrugged his shoulders as he continued, "Also, from the developer's perspective, I take responsibility and say that as long as it is a program, it will follow the setting written in the software. So you don't have to worry about Little White releasing private user information because I won't permit it."

The sounds of discussions and note-taking filled the room as the second person, a middle-aged man, stood up and asked his question.

"I'm a reporter from Renren News. Mr. Jiang Chen, currently, there are no laws or regulations in place regarding artificial intelligence. What is your opinion on the possible proposal of the <Artificial Intelligence Management Act>, and what would be Future Technology's response to this?"

[Renren News? (Referring to Han's state news agency.) This is going to be a bit problematic.] Jiang Chen's head spun rapidly.

[As an official media source, it represents the voice of the government. There is definitely a deeper meaning behind this question. Are they testing me? Or giving me a hint?]

"Of course, Future Technology will firmly abide by the regulations in place without question—this includes the introduced <Artificial Intelligence Management Act>. Future Technology will cooperate with authorities to adjust our services to fit within the frame established."

Jiang Chen cautiously answered the question by expressing his support and willingness to cooperate. He did not, however, express his views regarding the regulation itself. He had a feeling that the question came from a law-making authority since artificial intelligence regulation was a blank slate in all countries of the world. Judging from the current stage, the development of artificial intelligence was still in its infancy, and nothing had yet to reach even the basic levels.

Upon hearing Jiang Chen's response, the middle-aged man sat down deep in thought.

Immediately following after, a blond beauty stood up.

"I am BBC's reporter. Mr. Jiang Chen, it is known that artificial intelligence requires strong hardware equipment to support functionality. IBM Watson, for example, requires ninety IBM

servers and three hundred sixty computer processors to maintain its operation. Yet somehow, the Future 1.0 developed by your company could operate on a mobile platform. How did you manage to achieve this?"

BBC's question came from a technological perspective, and based on the crowd's reaction, many other reporters were also interested in the answer.

"Sorry, this is a trade secret. What I can disclose, however, is that it is based on a database. The core of the artificial intelligence that we developed is not the hardware, but rather the software. It doesn't have a high requirement for computational power, and the database is the critical element instead. It accepts external information and exports database information. As long as the database is maintained, Future 1.0 can operate on a mobile platform. Clearly, we have achieved this."

Jiang Chen confidently used the bullsh\*t Du Yongkang gave him as he wasn't worried that any of the experts would be able to uncover anything. As far as the people in this world knew, there was only one person on his team that managed to develop this innovative technology, which was comparable to Bill Gates' Windows 1.0.

Database?

All of the reporters' eyes lit up.

"I am a reporter from Japanese Economy. Mr. Jiang Chen,

because the current stage of artificial intelligence development is still difficult for the world's scientific community, would Mr. Jiang Chen please have a heart like Andy, the developer of Android, and release the magical artificial intelligence database to the world?" a short, suited man asked slowly after bowing politely.

Mockery crept onto Jiang Chen's face before he managed to hide it.

[I can't believe you had the audacity to say that. For the scientific community? Heart?]

[Then why don't you disclose all of your country's technology?]

But it was within his expectations that this sort of brainless question would come from a right-wing Japanese media source.

"I say it is meaningful because it would push the growth of the human civilization. To demonstrate your willingness, perhaps you should convince your country to surrender all armed forces? It would be a historic step for world peace. I look forward to your response."

Laughter erupted in the hall as some Chinese reporters mocked the shamelessness of this Japanese reporter. The short man gave Jiang Chen a dirty look before awkwardly seating himself.

Jiang Chen shrugged and signaled for the next reporter's question. He didn't have the time to deal with rude people.

"I'm CNN's reporter, and I'd like to ask Mr. Jiang Chen whether user privacy for Future 1.0 is really so secure as your company has stated it to be. Based on the software encryption, your company made the software into an impenetrable black box. No one could test it from a security point of view. So what if Little White passes information gathered from the user to your desktop? Of course, this is only an example. Could you prove that it won't happen?"

It was a harsh question, but many others were concerned about the same issue.

For a dead software, even if it was filled with back doors, you would not question its security until the problems were exposed.

But for software that felt alive, despite the developer's efforts to prove its safety, you would be skeptical as it behaved too similarly to humans.

"I'm not the FBI, why would I need a user's private information?" Jiang Chen laughed and splayed his palms. "Let me give you an example then. Based on the Washington Post's report, the CIA and FBI directly infiltrated the central servers of Microsoft, Google, Facebook, and a total of nine tech giants to track users: email, phone calls, documents, and videos. What's your opinion on this?"

"May I ask if this is related to today's question?" The reporter from CNN showed an awkward expression.

"Of course. I want to explain that invasion of user privacy has



nothing to do with the software itself. Because despite being an artificial intelligence, it has no concept of personal interest. Even if you uninstalled him after spending several days together, he will only wave his hands to say goodbye. Attempting to invade another's privacy could only come from another human. But I assure you here and now that I will never do that! As long as I remain president of Future Technology, the company will never allow such actions."

Jiang Chen looked the reporter in the eye as he said this. The hall filled with the sound of applause.

He signaled for quiet as he passed the time to the next reporter.

Jiang Chen answered the following questions with ease. He answered what he could, and if not, then he made something up. If that didn't work, he blamed it on trade secrets. Jiang Chen had always been proud of his acting skills.

At the end, the reporters asked: "When will the foreign version be available?" "Would Future Technology consider venture capital?" Or even an irrelevant question such as, "Do you have a girlfriend?"

Some interesting queries included, "What's the meaning behind Future Technology's name?"

Jiang Chen answered half-jokingly, "Because my team and I envision the future."

And another sensitive question was, "Would artificial intelligence be used in the military field?"

Jiang Chen's response was clear-cut. "Chat-based artificial intelligence will only exist for the purpose of interaction. It will not calculate rocket trajectory for you because that would require high-performance computers and experts. Unless you're worried about soldiers who are too lonely and want to find a companion."

He managed to win the majority of the media's positive impressions thanks to his clear and straightforward responses.

Certainly, media outlets with criticisms still existed. For example, the short man from Japanese Economy seemed to be thinking up malevolent ideas to use to attack Jiang Chen.

But who cared? At the very least, Jiang Chen didn't.

Who would care about a media that only distorted the truth?

After the closing remarks, Future Technology's first media conference ended on a high note amidst applause.

—

"I can't believe you're so deft at improvising in your reactions." Xia Shiyu nodded, seeming impressed as she looked at Jiang Chen.

"Haha." Jiang Chen narcissistically raised his head and laughed. He then arrogantly raised his eyebrows. "You realize this only now? I'm this fu\*king awesome."

"Could you be more civil, please? You are a public figure now," Xia Shiyu said, slightly displeased.

Public figure?

He realized the problem with a troubled expression on his face once more.

[Fu\*k, then I have to be careful with everything I do? How can I enjoy my life from now on?]

"Could a camera point at me the moment I leave my house?" Jiang Chen scratched his head as he asked.

"..." Xia Shiyu speechlessly stared at Jiang Chen before she sighed. "Being a public figure means that your words and actions represent the company. If you do any uncivil acts, this would directly influence the public's impression of our company. If it gets uploaded onto the internet, it could potentially escalate... Why are you looking at me like that?"

"I just think that you care more about Future Technology than even I do. I'm pleased." Jiang Chen grinned.

"..." Xia Shiyu lost her words once more.

The only thing that didn't change was her emotionless expression.

Jiang Chen was eager to change out of his uncomfortable suit.

"Oh right." Just as he was about to leave the backstage area, Xia Shiyu abruptly stopped him.

"Mhmm?" Jiang Chen turned around looking confused.

"Ummm, in consideration of the company's publicity... of course, it is not right to interfere in your private life, but do you really not have a girlfriend?" Xia Shiyu didn't look in Jiang Chen's direction. Instead, she stared blankly at the ground as her finger twirled the tips of her hair. Her voice remained calm as usual.

Jiang Chen was shocked, and his face took a particularly odd tone.

"What if I do?" He probed to see her reaction.

"!"

[You are about to rip your hair out!]

"But in reality, no." Jiang Chen immediately added.

"..."

[Her mouth curved up?]

At this moment, even as dumb as he was, he realized...

"Ahem, in this case, it'll be okay. But you should still be careful about your private life. If news got out that you're still single, some people with ill-intentions may... anyways, just be careful."

Jiang Chen locked his eyes onto Xia Shiyu, who was being unusually chattiness, with the same peculiar expression.

"Do you... like me?"

# Chapter 78: Test?

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"Do you... like me?"

Jiang Chen recalled the conversation backstage as he scratched his nose with a troubled smile.

"Why am I so charming?" he said to himself with a cocky flair before becoming overwhelmed by embarrassment again. He turned the car radio on in an attempt to drown his awkwardness in the noise.

Xia Shiyu was the type to be shy, easily embarrassed by anything. Even with her emotionless face, she was cold only on the outside, warm on the inside.

The atmosphere had been intimate. Her mouth half-open, she had been completely at a loss with the situation. Just at that moment, however, an untimely phone call with an explosive ringtone broke the delicate closeness. Jiang Chen, realizing it was his phone, was about to hang up when Xia Shiyu quickly gathered her wits and then fled the room with her head buried.

[...Fine. Perhaps that phone call had perfect timing.]

Or else he wouldn't have had a clue on how to disengage from that awkward situation. He wasn't sure about his attitude towards her either. He used to masturbate to her image long ago for quite some time, but he hadn't had such thoughts for a while now.

Perhaps his mentality had changed?

Shaking his head, he had tried to push away the strange thoughts in his mind.

And then his phone rang once more.

He thought for a second, the same troubled smile crossing his face.

There was no point in hanging up again. He sighed and connected the call with his Bluetooth headphones.

The voice from the other side had made him fall into a deep contemplation again.

Wang Zhiyong?

Jiang Chen was now on his way to the home of Wang Dehai, the general secretary of Wanghai City. The elder wished to invite him over for dinner to express his sincere gratitude for saving his life.

But the phone call had been too timely, coming not long after ending the press conference. It felt unnatural to Jiang Chen, yet it was the general secretary's invitation. And he had saved his life, so it probably wouldn't be anything too terrible. After a moment's hesitation, he began his drive over.

It was a serene community without seeming too luxurious, but the amount of vegetation here was rare to see in the entire Wanghai City. The security at the door seemed to be retired soldiers. He could feel the bloodlust from several meters away. These guys must have come from a border conflict.

All of the residents in this community had to be influential in some way. Even with money, not everyone could be the general secretary's neighbor.

He parked the car in the building before walking up to knock on the door.

The door opened momentarily, revealing a cheerful face before him.

"You're here. Come in, my mom wants to thank you personally." Wang Xinran grinned at Jiang Chen.

"Hmmm? Don't you live on campus?" Jiang Chen was surprised to see her.

"It's Saturday. Is President Jiang Chen so busy that he forgot the date?" She playfully poked her tongue out.

[Hmm, now that I don't work, it's hard to keep track.]



As soon as he entered, he was greeted with warmth. He was surprised by the generosity and welcoming gestures, making him feel slightly ashamed since he had his own motives in saving people. But regardless of the reason, he did fight off death and save Wang Dehai.

He most mostly taken aback by the fact that Wang Dehai was not like other grim politicians who acted fiercely. Instead, he lacked the daunting vibe, seeming instead like a kind elderly man. Seeing Jiang Chen, he warmly called out Little Jiang (little is a common way to refer to younger people). Aware of the situation, Jiang Chen responded by calling him Uncle Wang.

Wang Dehai's wife was a grandma with kind features who consistently served Jiang Chen food. It certainly gave Jiang Chen, who had been venturing outside, a sense of home.

Wang Zhiyong was an interesting person as well. He kept trying to drink with Jiang Chen, but his weak alcohol tolerance put him under the table first. When he started spouting gibberish, his sister stuck him back in his room as he snored.

Jiang Chen always viewed straightforward people in a positive light.

As for Wang Xinran, she maintained her usual level of energy as she pestered him with questions about Future 1.0. She also informed him that she became the top member of the distinguished alumni at Wanghai University—the youngest to ever take the spot.

Unfortunately, the list only circulated within the school and didn't hold much influence since few students held an interest in the school newspaper anymore.

As for her questions, Jiang Chen didn't disclose anything outside of the norm. Everything he said was consistent with his stance at the press conference.

As he spoke with Wang Xinran, he kept most of his attention on Wang Dehai for his reaction.

What did this powerful politician think about Future 1.0?

Support? Or more reserved?

—

After dinner, Wang Dehai called Jiang Chen into his office.

"Feel free to sit. Don't be nervous, I just want to chat with you." Wang Dehai saw Jiang Chen was nervous and smiled warmly as he invited him to take a seat.

"Haha, Uncle Wang, I'll make myself comfortable then." Jiang Chen settled himself onto the sofa across from him.

He didn't dare to pretend to be an "ancient remedy doctor"

anymore. In Han, all of the intelligent people were politicians, particularly a powerful one like Wang Dehai. The difficulty in convincing him on a story was nearly impossible. Even the finest acting would have its flaws.

Say as little as possible.

But Jiang Chen had clearly overthought the matter.

Wang Dehai didn't pry into the matter of how he cured rabies. Instead, he started talking about his childhood anecdotes.

"My rabies was probably from the sixties. I was young, my dad was being punished, and I got bit by the dogs of those crazy politicians. I remember the bite was about this big on my leg. I initially didn't think it would be a problem after so many years, but it still turned out to be worse. Haha."

Wang Dehai used his hand to show the size of the scar. Jiang Chen smiled, but didn't respond.

He knew it was better to listen since elders enjoyed telling young people their stories. They didn't need comfort or praise, only an audience that was willing to hear them out.

Although he didn't know what Wang Dehai was planning, since he treated Jiang Chen as one of the younger generation instead of as a subordinate, Jiang Chen's impression of him was not too bad.

He heard many stories from Wang Dehai.

Until the end.

"Now, we are finally powerful. Good, good, good!" In a nostalgic tone, Wang Dehai repeated "good" three times as he looked in Jiang Chen's direction with a look full of hidden meanings.

The show had finally started.

Jiang Chen's focused as he waited for this powerful politician to speak.

"Little Jiang, is it feasible for artificial intelligence to be used in the military?" Wang Dehai casually asked as he sipped his tea.

"Of course," Jiang Chen responded without hesitation before sternly saying, "It would be a disaster to the country and even the world."

"Oh?" Wang Dehai was quite interested by Jiang Chen's response and waited for the context.

"Artificial intelligence is not human. If the life and death of a human is given to a program to oversee, it would only take a programming error to cause a catastrophic disaster. In the end, the law cannot regulate lines of code."

"Oh? But if artificial intelligence soldiers could replace human soldiers going into war, could it not eliminate the need for bloodshed?"

"No, there will only be more casualties." A troubled smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

Wang Dehai's gaze bored into him.

Since this elder was asking him, it meant that it was not the worst scenario. From the looks of things, even the top had not managed to reach a consensus yet. Too many parties were involved in this. There was no need to talk about whether it was feasible for artificial intelligence to replace soldiers; how many PLA would be discharged? How many people would want to shut his mouth?

Even foreign agents would target him.

Cold sweat began to drench Jiang Chen's shirt as he thought about the possible repercussions.

"Since Uncle Wang mentioned bloodshed, may I ask, does this mean our country is going into war soon?"

"Of course. There are always some fools who want to take action." Wang Dehai raised his eyebrows but explained anyway.

"Then Uncle, if a cheap, effective, and powerful weapon is introduced, how would this change the current situation?" Jiang

Chen carefully said.

"An arms race? That's based on whether the technological capabilities are the same." Wang Dehai dismissed the idea with a wave of his hand.

"So the question is," he said with a troubled smile. "But I don't have it. Like how I explained at the press conference, Future 1.0 can answer questions logically and given permission from users, operate fundamental phone functions. To give an analogy, Windows 7 is effective, but you don't expect it to control a PC as well as robots, right?"

"Could you not make any adjustments? For example, include a fire control system." Wang Dehai persisted, reluctant to give up.

"I don't have any understanding of firearms. I would have to start from scratch to gain any understanding. Also, from a practical standpoint, does the country need a scientist now, or a possible 'Bill Gates' who will lead the industry for the next ten years?" Jiang Chen gazed seriously into Wang Dehai's eyes.

Wang Dehai shouldn't have been pushing this hard as the developer team was supposedly overseas.

As he spoke, Jiang Chen was also planning in his mind, going so far as to think that if the authority were to take action, then he would drop everything and run overseas. There was still four hundred million USD in his Swiss bank account. He could start over from scratch again anywhere.

Wang Dehai also stared at Jiang Chen.

But soon, his fierce gaze disappeared, and he took a sip of his tea with a smile on his face.

"You and I have the same understanding. Don't be so anxious."

Jiang Chen let out a breath of relief. To be honest, he was reluctant to leave unless he was forced to.

"I won't lie to you—we have always been researching artificial intelligence. The other countries are doing the same. It's not a major project, but we have quite a large budget for it. It's just that we haven't had any results yet." Wang Dehai looked meaningfully at Jiang Chen. "Some people even said that you should voluntarily give out this technology. Do you know what I said?"

Jiang Chen thought for a moment before he smiled. "Uncle Wang must have thought further than them."

Wang Dehai laughed.

"You're quite clever. I told them, you guys are all old and stubborn! If we did that, who would dare to reveal new technology here? You're pushing all of the talent away!"

Before he finished his sentence, Jiang Chen knew.

Even if they controlled the person in headquarters, with the development team based overseas, if they were pushed away to unfriendly nations, wasn't that providing them with a more advanced technology? What could they do? If they didn't have exclusive possession of the technology, what was the point of it?

"Thank you," Jiang Chen said with a peculiar expression. There was nothing else for him to say.

He didn't understand Wang Dehai's intention. Friendliness? Who was he representing? Or was he returning the favor?

"You don't need to thank me. I'm not the only one supporting you. The old guy from the Zhou family was more anxious than me." He sipped the tea again and looked at Jiang Chen. "His family is responsible for military artificial intelligence project with a budget of five hundred million a year."

Jiang Chen immediately understood.

Just as he suspected, even the top level had not reached a consensus. Or perhaps a better way to put it was that collectively, they were unified, but when it touched their own cake, the situation became much more complex.

Or else, the authority would not have waited for him to finish the press conference. The moment Future 1.0 was released, trouble would have ensued.



Once it came into the world's spotlight, it would be too costly to work from the shadows again. It was related to the country's attitude; they were already having difficulty retaining talent. If they proceeded with the plan, they would be chasing away the talents.

The key now was not to be stronger, but to become more stable.

"I'll ask only one more question. What's the value of Future 1.0 in the military industry? And be truthful." Wang Dehai locked onto Jiang Chen's eyes. In his aged gaze, there was less kindness and more ferocity.

[It's not the right time to go into the military. There are too many personal interests attached to it.]

Thoughts flashed through his mind as he firmly answered the powerful authority figure, "Zero."

Wang Dehai nodded, a smile appearing on his face.

"Then, as the general secretary of Wanghai City, I hope you are able to contribute substantially to the city's economic development! I also wish to see Future Technology significantly benefit the lives of the people and do even greater things!"

With a genuine smile, he answered, "Of course!"

[Is he hinting at me to not overreach the limits of civil usage?]

[Looks like Wang Dehai was not trying to convince me, but rather test me. The Wang and Zhou families probably wear the same pants....]

Thinking about this point, he was not afraid, but he still felt a chill run down his spine.

He originally had the ambition to take Future Technology to the military field, but now it seemed as though he had been overzealous.

[Did Wang Dehai help me?]

Of course, since the Zhou family did not go after him right away.

But would he have repaid Jiang Chen's favor if the interests of the Wang and Zhou families had been on the line? Probably not, since then it was no longer a personal issue. If Jiang Chen showed the slightest interest in military, or if Future 1.0 had the possibility of encroaching into the field....

Wang Dehai would not do anything, but the Zhou family would not let him walk free either.

At that time, they would threaten him into giving up the technology before getting rid of him. Or, they would get rid of him right away without even asking for the technology.

It would of course result in Jiang Chen's escape, but he would have a hard time returning home again.

Would it be beneficial for the country?

If they truly cared, then they would not have been so greedy.

All of the smart people were in politics.

Throughout history, the motivated and the honest died on the battlefield, the knowledgeable avoided politics, and the intelligence belonged in the forbidden city.

It was better for the simple to stay away from the intelligent.

Jiang Chen didn't reveal any of his thoughts. As soon as he left, he inhaled deeply.

He suddenly realized that the past few days had been more tiring than living in the apocalypse.

"Why do I tire myself out? Am I missing the purpose here?" Jiang Chen mocked himself as he shook his head.

Regardless of whether he thought too much or not, he didn't consider Wang Dehai to be reliable.

Favors were like bills. Once used, it was gone. But it was almost more complex than that since items had a set price; at least you knew how much remained.

The only good news was that Future 1.0 would not receive too much hindrance from regulations; this danger faded in its infancy.

# Chapter 79: Game Online

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<...Artificial Intelligence will be the prevailing trend in the progression of modern society. For the growing tech industry, authorities expressed their high regards. On the other hand, for the artificial intelligence program available on the market, authorities are in the process of completing the necessary regulations to protect the interest of the people and corporations...>

Renren news report.

The government media authority did not report extensively on the details of Future 1.0 as they focused on the bigger picture in regards to the current state of artificial intelligence. They reported mainly on the regulatory environment. However, CTV did praise highly about the outstanding performance of Future 1.0.

The local media was all over the place with their reporting, so Jiang Chen didn't place too much emphasis on it. Besides, he cared more about the government media's stance because it often hinted on the perspective the authorities would take.

But now, after the conversation with Wang Dehai, there was no need to pay attention to it.

Jiang Chen, lying on the bed, turned off the domestic news and commanded Little White to pull up the current foreign news.

<Dictator – the next Steve Jobs in the Tech Industry?> (BBC)

[Mhmm, that was what I had planned.]

<Artificial Intelligence and privacy, Truth or Lie?> (CNN)

[The truth was presented to you, it's up to you to believe it or not.]

<2014 Most Attractive Men> (Mode)

[Did something weird just appear.]

Jiang Chen judged each headline as he continued to scroll through each one before throwing his phone to the side. Just as he was about to go back to the apocalypse, his phone suddenly vibrated.

He picked up his phone. It was Robert who had sent him an email.

<Hi! Buddy, you really transitioned?>

Jiang Chen smiled as he could imagine his shocked look. That guy's jaw probably dropped to the ground when he saw the guy he knew on the news.

<Of course, please call me the president of Future Technology now. You? Are you still doing the same thing?>

<No, no, no. The FBA invited me twice to chat already. After finishing the Baton guy, I stopped. Please call me producer now :P>

The Baton guy was probably the insider who sold him out. But Jiang Chen didn't bother with Robert's business as he would just ask Robert to take him around when he does go to Los Angeles. For now, he had no reason to leave the country.

[Of course, who could predict the future.]

Just as Jiang Chen was about to put his phone down again, the phone rang.

Xia Shiyu?

"Hello? Do you miss me?" Lazily, Jiang Chen picked up the phone.

"Are you not coming to work today?"

She cunningly reacted to her superior's harassment.

Jiang Chen nodded, pleased with the reaction, and continued.

"I have already given you the permission on the specific tasks, can you not let me be a relaxed billionaire?"

"Mhmm. If you have time today, drop by. I had a feeling that you were about the leave for a long time. I still have some things that I need you to decide on."

Jiang Chen was shocked.

[This girl is psychic, how did she know I was about to leave.]

Jiang Chen sat up from the comfort of his bed.

"Wait, I'll be there soon."

—

Different from the usual emptiness, Future Technology's headquarters already began to feel busy. Because of the need for people, training was halted and people learned on the job.

The employees apparently recognized the president as they cheerfully greeted him.

Jiang Chen smiled and didn't interrupt their work. Instead, he walked directly towards Xia Shiyu's office.

"Eh, what do you think is the relationship between the president and Miss Xiao?" The cute girl at the front desk poked at her colleague.



"What. If Miss Xiao heard you, she'd cut your bonus. Hehe, but if I would guess, it's not that simple."

He had knocked before he was given permission to come in with "Please come in."

"Hmmm? You are here?" Xia Shiyu's tone was rather stiff as she dodged his eyes.

A forced smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face. [Is it because of yesterday? If it is awkward from now on, it will be problematic...]

He didn't know why he asked that question.

But business first. If he didn't take care of things now in the modern world, it would be hard to take care of the issues after he comes back from the apocalypse.

He cleared his throat to break the awkwardness and then spoke as if nothing had happened.

"Mhmm, what is the current user base of Future 1.0?"

Xia Shiyu saw that he didn't bring up yesterday's topic, so she secretly felt relieved. Then she picked up a report on the table.

"Future 1.0's user base already broke through the two hundred

million mark, but the growth speed is slowing down," She pushed up her glasses as she reported to Jiang Chen with professionalism.

"Not bad. Then we can go to the next step. Is the application procedure for the game finished? Is the operations team familiar with the game now?"

Jiang Chen asked as he flipped through the document Xia Shiyu passed over.

"The application procedure finished awhile ago. As to the operations team, they are familiarizing themselves with the game. Because they only started yesterday, it is still being completed. However, the game you provided has a perfect backend, so the task is almost complete."

[Looks like Yao Yao did an excellent job.] Jiang Chen smiled with the cute girl in mind and continued.

"What about marketing?"

"It's been ongoing, we have done advertisements and cinematics. Based on the feedback from our official site, the users have high hopes for the landmark mobile game. The post with the highest upvote even said that he is waiting for us to create virtual reality helmets that come from fictional novels," Xia Shiyu said half-jokingly, but it scared Jiang Chen.

[What, did I say I was going to develop virtual reality? Was this

person reborn?]

"Based on this, users have extremely positive opinion about our company's technology. President, are you okay?" Xia Shiyu looked at Jiang Chen's puzzled expression, confused. She had a trace of worriedness in her tone.

"Ahem, nothing. I just think I should control how much I show off." Jiang Chen forced a laugh.

[Maybe I am being too sensitive.]

Xia Shiyu ignored his nonsense words and continued.

"Then should we introduce the game now?"

Jiang Chen thought for a moment.

"Mhmm, I think it's about time. Start the registration and pre-download tonight. The official release will be within this month. You can decide the exact strategy. The bug system in the game is also advanced, so the employees only need to troubleshoot based on the description provided by the system. The operation of the game should have no problems. This is the decision then. <New Era> will come online!"

Jiang Chen was confident about this game. The introduction of Future 1.0 freed the hardware limitations of the mobile platform which would foster a series of the high-quality mobile games. This

would fundamentally change the mobile game industry. The original popular masterpieces would not necessarily get replaced by the new generation of games, but they would definitely be impacted and forced to make adjustments.

It was the perfect opportunity for Future Technology to enter the mobile gaming market.

Xia Shiyu nodded as she also believed it was time. The release of the game would also turn the company's current income statement around, which was now in the red.

"Another key aspect. Do you have any recommendations for the direction of the game?" Xia Shiyu had to ask Jiang Chen about the macro development strategy of the company.

"You can make your own decision. I know you are a lot more knowledgeable than me in regards to operational strategy." Jiang Chen smiled.

"No, I mean the bigger picture. It is extremely difficult for a mobile game to balance KPI and ACU..."

"Wait, what is KPI?" Jiang Chen was at a loss.

Xia Shiyu was at a loss too.

"KPI, key performance indicators."

Jiang Chen embarrassedly scratched his head as he realized he was an amateur in business.

However...

"What about ACU?" He gulped as he shamelessly asked.

"Average concurrent user... President, maybe it would be a good idea to learn some fundamentals?" Xia Shiyu said sounding worried.

Jiang Chen's face flushed, but it would be impossible for him to admit his small fault in this. "Ahem, why didn't you just put it in simpler terms? Profit and user base right?"

Xia Shiyu's eyes twitched as she sighed, "Mhmm, you could interpret it that way."

He gave it a thought. "You don't have to worry about profit, for now, we don't lack cash. Compared to short-term profits, I care more about long term sustainable growth. If we have to sacrifice the lifespan of the game for profit, it will undermine the quality of our game."

"Understood. President and I share the same thought. Since we already have the advantage in technology, no company can copy our game. Therefore, we don't have to worry about the lifespan of <New Era> for now. Once we establish the first group of users, we

can then consider the profit," Xia Shiyu agreed as she took out another piece of documentation.

Jiang Chen scanned it as it revolved around the details of the game's operation. For example the purchase method and game model. It had nothing to do with the game content.

[Should be okay then.]

"Now that everything is cleared up, I need to go somewhere far away in the next few days." Jiang Chen put the document aside as he was getting ready to leave.

"Where are you going now?" Xia Shiyu sighed as she rubbed her head.

"Maybe I will tell you one day?" Jiang Chen laughed as he walked out of the door, leaving a bewildered Xia Shiyu.

[How long till that one day comes?

Probably when I am powerful enough to go head to head with the forces of an entire nation.]

## Chapter 80: Zombies' Change

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In an instant, the pristine clouds were replaced by the cloudy traditional dust, spider-like cracks crept onto the smooth walls, and the wooden door began to wither away.

The animation style changed drastically.

The comfort behind his back was the same, but he was on the "other side."

It was his room in the apocalypse.

He sat up on the bed and scanned the clean bedsheets as a smile emerged on his face.

There was not the slightest dust. Although he didn't know if it was Yao Yao or Sun Jiao, someone cleaned the place up every day.

He picked up the PK200 resting against the wall, and as if reunited with an old friend, he motioned a few positions with it. The only thing dusty in the room was this rifle. He picked up a towel to wipe it clean before he threw it into the storage dimension.

When he pushed open the door, he tiptoed from the corner of the wall. Then he quietly walked to Sun Jiao room to give the person he hasn't seen for a while a surprise kiss.

The surprised voice accompanied by a long awaited hug. He felt her pounding heart as Jiang Chen hugged Sun Jiao with a smirk. He then followed her to the expanding outer circle.

When he stepped onto the brick road in front of the mansion, he always had an indescribable feeling of satisfaction.

Just like a king in the middle ages, the mansion was his castle. The refugees, who worked hard outside of the castle, were his citizens and Sun Jiao was the Dutchess of the castle. Yao Yao in the castle... umm, let's talk about that later.

When he stood there before, he could only smell suppression in the air. But now, he felt relaxed.

No conspiracy and no need to guess as everyone's heartbeat was captured on his EP. If it was not for the tedious injection procedure and the lack of equipment, he would love to bring a set of slavery microchips to the real world.

But just as he pushed open the mansion doors, he was shocked.

—

"Umm, why did the expansion stop?" Jiang Chen looked at Sun Jiao, troubled by what he saw.

The construction material was stacked up on the open ground as the expansion came to a complete halt.



"The zombies outside were acting weird." Sun Jiao had a stern face as she took Jiang Chen onto the watchtower.

Jiang Chen followed the direction Sun Jiao pointed to, and a look of shock appeared on his face.

"Those zombies..."

"Yes, all of them seem to be on some hard drug." Sun Jiao picked up a rock and threw it into the distance.

The rock made a "clunk" sound as it hit a car's roof. The zombies nearby immediately turned around and howled and dashed at the car. The car door was deformed by the group of zombies as their dirty hands penetrated through the car window and flipped open the engine cover.

After only a while, the zombies realized there were no living creatures and they gradually dispersed.

This was in broad daylight!

"What, can we even leave then?" Jiang Chen stared at the hysterical zombies.

Now, the zombies finally had a feel similar to <Resident Evil>. The fierce and bloody pupil seemed to foretell that any living

creature who dares to appear in front of them would be ripped to pieces.

Or even more vicious than that?

"The unknown bacteria level is rising in the air. Maybe it's because of this bacteria that the zombies have become so ferocious. There's a possibility that it has blocked the UV, but it doesn't look like it as the vegetation didn't get affected." Sun Jiao frowned as she took over the terminal from the patrolling guard and showed Jiang Chen.

<Unknown bacteria concentration level: 13>

"What is this?" Jiang Chen asked feeling puzzled.

"The terminal is connected to the air detection tower. We bought it from Zhao Corporation. The Sixth Street also experienced a similar situation, so Zhao Chenwu thought we would need this. The unknown bacteria that's floating in the air has a similar mechanism to the original zombie bacteria. It could be eliminated by vaccination or through the immune system of people injected with the genetic vaccine. But if the bacteria level passes a certain threshold, it could only be avoided with protective wear. So I bought 150 protective wear, just in case."

He followed the direction Sun Jiao pointed to, and Jiang Chen noticed a pitchfork-like detector on top of the residential building. The light green film between the pitchfork slowly rotated.

"Not bad. But I have a question, I thought zombies would be weakened under UV?" Jiang Chen asked with his eyebrows raised.

"That's right, that is what I am confused about too. Because zombies would also require energy, the mutant bacteria on its neck would react to UV and force most of the body's functions into rest mode and enter photosynthesis," Sun Jiao repeated the common sense everyone knew in the apocalypse.

"Could it be, this type of bacteria is charging the zombies?" Jiang Chen thought for a moment before he suddenly spoke.

Sun Jiao was lost.

"Charging? Through what method?"

"The floating bacteria in the air uses a unique method to complete the photosynthesis effect for the zombie. It then enters the zombie body to be "digested," therefore the zombies would always be charged and would no longer require photosynthesis."

Sun Jiao gave it a thought.

"That's possible, although it has no scientific backing, you do have your point."

"Is the entire Wanghai city like this?"

"Only part of the area. Based on news from the Sixth Street, the bacteria seems to be spreading from a source. The saving grace is that the bacteria would not self-divide, so it could only be produced from a source. Based on the concentration spread of the bacteria, if we use triangulation on the map, we are relatively certain that there is an area beside us with a high concentration of bacteria. Most likely, the source of it is there."

Sunjiao took out the full-sensory computer and opened the 3D map. A triangular area was marked.

"What's the closest survival camp? Do they have any reactions?" Jiang Chen thought about it as he said with serious concern.

A pained smile appeared on her face.

"We are the closest survival camp. The majority of people belong to community level survival groups, so we are considered the largest. Currently no action."

"If we continue to let these things grow, it would be hazardous. We have to find a way to proactively eliminate the source of this bacteria. But now, it doesn't look like we can get out." Jiang Chen watched the zombie-filled streets as distress seeped in.

"You are right. The bacteria seems to be migrating the zombies to the direction of human settlements. The zombies have already attacked our door for the sixth time within 15 days. Our current trade with other survival groups was forced to stop. The good thing is that there are no zombies in the underground system, so

we still managed to maintain the connection with the Sixth Street." Sun Jiao looked concerned, but she was out of sorts with these zombies.

"Zhao Chenwu probably has a headache too. The other exit to the sewerage is at least a couple hundred meters away from the Sixth Street," Jiang Chen felt fortunate as he was smart enough to create a corridor with a concrete wall that directly included the exit into the base.

"Ok, let's not talk about this for now. Tell me how the base is growing." Jiang Chen was concerned.

"The trade differential between Zhao Corporation in September is 10102 crystal. The total trade amount exceeded one hundred and ten thousand crystals. The canned foods sold very well on the Sixth Street. Zhao Chenwu had the intention to significantly increase sales, but I refused on the basis that you headed back to acquire supplies. Because of the halt of the expansion, the construction material had been accumulating. The Zhao Corporation could not pay with crystals, so they proposed to sell us populations at a price of 50 per person for a total of 100 to make up for the remaining payment. The population of the base is at 130." Of course, it didn't include Sun Jiao, Yaoyao, and Jiang Chen.

"The price increased?"

"The cost of the population increased substantially. The chip price remained the same." Sun Jiao forced a smile. "Because of the dangerous external environment and the fact that the Sixth Street is planning to eliminate two sources near the area, the demand for

population increased substantially."

"How's the soldiers' training?"

"There is a total of 41 that received qualification from the virtual reality training chamber. Everyone is injected with the D-level genetic vaccine and can become part of the force," Sun Jiao called out some data and reported.

"The bacteria source must be eliminated." Jiang Chen looked into the distance with a gloomy look on his face. "I have a feeling that the stuff in the air is only going to increase. Then it would be even harder to approach the source."

"Then I'll prepare first. Let's make the combat plan today, and then I'll bring a team with me tomorrow." Sun Jiao nodded.

"I'll go along," Jiang Chen said sternly.

"No," Sun Jiao rejected without hesitation.

"Listen to me."

"With your shooting?"

"My combat power is okay now. Also, I can use my special ability to escape the battle. The most important thing is that I am worried about letting you go alone," Jiang Chen stared into Sun Jiao's eyes

as he said seriously.

There was a more important reason he didn't explain. He wanted to use the opportunity to meet the survival groups along the way.

If Sun Jiao led the negotiation, he had a feeling it would turn into a full-scale combat.

On top of that, his combat ability would never increase if he always stayed in safety.

When she heard "he was worried", Sun Jiao blushed but quickly recollected her thoughts.

She debated a little more before sighing in reluctance.

"Okay, I'll agree to it."

Jiang Chen smiled as he gave a thankful look for Sun Jiao's agreement.

"Ahem. Also, there are not a lot of food at the base. Could you get some more," Sun Jiao awkwardly coughed as she diverted the topic.

"Food? No problem." Jiang Chen smiled as he disappeared.

Sun Jiao had to gather her thought as she stared at the place Jiang Chen vanished from.

[Fair, if he has this special ability, he would escape from any danger.]

Sun Jiao felt more at ease.

It was the first time.

Perhaps the first time was in the underground sewerage. The feeling when she knew he was okay, the time when she placed someone else's life before her own.



# Chapter 81: Yao Yao's Thought

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Jiang Chen returned to the modern world and called the same food distributor's number before driving to the rural area storage unit.

When he arrived at the destination, Jiang Chen noticed that the boss there was already waiting for him. He didn't waste his time as he started to order people to unload the supplies into the storage. Jiang Chen ordered twice the amount as last time.

31 tons of rice, 10 tons of flour, 700 boxes of canned meat, and 500 boxes of canned fruit, as well as oil, vinegar, salt, and other flavorings. Also, he ordered a few tons of easy to store vegetables such as cabbage, carrot, and potato.

Like what they agreed to last time, they didn't print stickers.

He paid the full three hundred twenty without a blink of an eye and immediately dismissed the boss that continuously tried to small talk with him.

He was much more careful this time as he didn't start the moving process right away. Instead, he released the drone that Yao Yao modified and scanned for any thermal information. After a careful examination, he realized he was holding his breath from worrying. Being reassured, he let out a breath of relief and walked into the warehouse, closing the door behind him.

He felt that he has become too suspicious lately.

Because of the limited space in the storage dimension, Jiang Chen had to travel back and forth ten times before he managed to transport everything.

A total cost of 400 crystals for an ordinary survivor would be a huge amount. But for him, it was only pocket change. Because of the trade differential between Zhao Corporation, the only thing he was worried about was how to spend the room full of crystals in his basement.

On paper, all crystals were transported back to the fictitious "headquarter."

Sun Jiao skillfully ordered people to enter the mansion and move the bags of food into the food warehouse. The good thing was they also built two more food warehouses on open ground. Otherwise, it would be difficult to find a place to store the food.

The idle survivors started to be busy again. Due to Jiang Chen's arrival, they were no longer surprised by the mountain-like stack of food.

The idle cooling system started operating again as the base's electricity usage climbed. But Sun Jiao was prepared for the situation as not only did she place solar panels on all the roofs within the wall, it even expanded to buildings outside of the wall.

Zombies and mutants had no interest in the boards on top of the roofs. The survivor's other side wasn't so despicable that they

would vandal the property since the machine guns on the watchtower did possess some deterrence abilities.

He heard Sun Jiao say that she also purchased an old ground thermal energy collection system, but currently, the base lacked personnel with knowledge in that area. She already arranged a few smart looking survivors to learn the related knowledge. There were important books in the city library, the information would only need to be downloaded into the virtual reality training chamber.

But to see results, it'll be at least a few months.

Seeing as Sun Jiao was busy, Jiang Chen headed to the technology department at the community center and found the hard-working Du Yongkang. He handed him the developed strategy for Future 1.0 as Jiang Chen ordered him to make upgrades based on that. Xia Shiyu gave it to him before he left in the morning. The company has no technology department, although they did hire server maintenance personnel, the program updating would have to be done through the middleman Jiang Chen.

He cautioned him about the encryption procedure. Jiang Chen then patted his shoulder and left, in Du Yongkang's surprised, with a proud look.

Jiang Chen returned to the mansion again.

He hasn't seen Yao Yao in a while, and he has missed her.

Ahem, don't be mistaken. Jiang Chen was not into a loli.

[Maybe?]

—

Yao Yao enjoyed reading. Even dry and boring computer books, she could focus and read them for a long time.

Although the virtual reality training system could speed up the education process, which Yao Yao already received in the hibernation chamber in the survival base, the deeper level knowledge could only be extracted from the book itself. These books were gifts Sun Jiao brought back from the library.

Although the electronic version was okay, the feeling of paper made her feel calmer.

Yao Yao sighed as she closed the book. She stretched out her frail arms and yawned.

[If only brother Jiang Chen could notice me more...]

She zoned out as she kept thinking, cupping her chin with both hands.

If it were before, she would blush because of her "inappropriate"

thoughts. But now, she could face her own heart.

She did fall in love with the gentle, sympathetic, strong... No, she would not stop if she continued.

Yao Yao lightly slapped her own face nervously as she ducked her almost burning head back into the books.

[I want to die...]

"You are going to hurt your eyes if you read so close." Jiang Chen oddly looked at Yao Yao's move with a smile on his face.

"Ahhhh!" The book flew out of Yao Yao's hands as she jumped up like a startled rabbit. She then fell, with the chair, to the ground.

Jiang Chen face palmed as he looked at Yao Yao's careless action. He was just about to help her up.

But then he suddenly remembered Sun Jiao's words.

"Yao Yao really cares about you..."

She rubbed her butt in pain as she sadly pouted her mouth. "Sor...sorry, I didn't notice brother was here."

"You need to take care of yourself. What if you get hurt?" Jiang

Chen helped Yao Yao up and stroked her soft hair as he seemingly "blamed" her.

Yao Yao suddenly buried her head into his chest and her hands tightly held onto his shirt. Tears began to fill up her adorable eyes.

"Brother do you dislike me now?"

Jiang Chen was confused. "How is that possible?"

"Then why have you been avoiding me," Yao Yao buried her head and murmured.

Avoiding?

Jiang Chen was lost.

To be fair, since the last time he saw her for a brief moment, he hasn't visited her in awhile.

Perplexed, he looked at the slightly quivering girl and felt guilty.

A little bit.

Jiang Chen really cared for Yao Yao, not only because she was the second friend he met in this world, or because she saved him and Sun Jiao, or she helped him before...

The best way to describe it was, a unique feeling.

Yao Yao's presence seemed to have fulfilled an emptiness in his heart, it allowed him to express a kind of protective desire.

But when Sun Jiao told him that Yao Yao likes him, and it was the kind of like between a man and a woman, he backed away.

Yes, Jiang Chen knew that he basically had no bottom line.

But Yao Yao...

Although Yao Yao's actual age was 36, she spent 20 years in the hibernation chamber. Her body practically paused all growth. Because of the side effects from hibernation, her body did not grow even after leaving the chamber for 2 years.

To summarize, she can be described by three numbers, 36, 16, 14.

That flat-looking body, not even perverts could do this.

But Yao Yao's mental age reached puberty, so it is understandable she started to feel emotions for the only guy that treated her with gentleness.

Understanding is one thing, but being able to do it is another.

He was afraid that he couldn't control himself and just end up eating Yao Yao.

Subconsciously, he unintentionally began to avoid responding to this emotion.

He hoped the feeling was more similar to someone she depended on, but he knew too well that that wasn't the case.

He had a special feeling for Yao Yao.

"I..." Jiang Chen opened his mouth to say something, but a delicate finger stopped him.

"No, you don't need to explain to Yao Yao. Yao Yao is very understanding." Yao Yao disappointedly buried her head deeper. She murmured as the faint sound came out of her lips.

"If brother doesn't like Yao Yao, Yao Yao won't force brother to reciprocate. Compared to small apples, big apples definitely taste better. For example like sister Sun Jiao's size, Yao Yao understand."

Her eyes shook slightly, but she bit her lip and determinately lifted her head.

"Yao Yao is happy to be living such a joyful life. But, it is still



important to give treats to cute animals. So I will do everything to help brother out. I am still updating the game. Yao Yao is also studying really hard on the computer. If Yao Yao can just get some small rewards, Yao Yao will be delighted and will work even harder. It's not too greedy of a request! Though if there really is none, it will be okay... but just a little is enough! Just share with me a tiny bit... No need to kiss, just rub my head.

Woo!"

The listless hesitation was suddenly blocked.

Her fragile look revealed how shocked she was, but then it turned into excitement and happiness, and finally into gentleness...

Yao Yao closed her eyes as she enjoyed the sudden burst of passion from her lips.

Jiang Chen kissed her.

Because of guilt? Self-blame? Impulse? Or maybe it was the compensation for the pure but ambiguous emotion.

He admits that he is a selfish person without boundaries, but he is not a cold person. When he found out that Yao Yao loved him dearly and was willing to do so much for him without return.

Sorry.

It was his first, without lust and desire.

The lavender like fragrance layered with her pure emotion spread from his lips into his head.

Like a terrified bunny, the softness gently explored the unknown. But just that one simple move almost took up her entire body's strength.

But a warm "hand" accepted it and caressed her soft head.

Jiang Chen felt the burning sensation on his face as Jiang Chen gently held up her face.

Separated.

A glowing wire carved a hint of impurity within the pure emotions.

Jiang Chen looked at Yao Yao as she tried to catch her breath and stared into her mist covered eyes. He finally resisted the desire in his heart and pulled his head away from Yao Yao.

Yao Yao, who just began to realized what had happened, buried her head.

Her head was completely blank as her cherry like mouth smiled,

closed, raised...

"Sorry. Although sorry probably doesn't mean much." Jiang Chen hugged the fragile body harder as he said sincerely, "I did notice your emotions, but I..."

"No, it's okay!" Yao Yao's tone suddenly went higher because of her excitement but soon quieted down. She murmured, "Could you just save some for me? As a reward..."

"No."

The adorable eyes teared up.

"Not your reward, as my reward." A smirk appeared on his face as he got closer to her earlobe. "Be mine?"

Tears burst out of her eyes, but it was tears of happiness.

"Mhmm!"

"Eh? Don't cry."

"Mhmm! Wooooo."

Jiang Chen made up his mind.

He didn't have any boundaries left, so might as well go balls deep!

He was not a courteous guy nor did he want to use a boring excuse to lie to himself. He had a good impression of Yao Yao. As in, it was not the type where it was simply a "sister and brother" kind of emotion.

[Worst case I'll just eat later...] (?????)

He made the decision as he chose to respond to this pure relationship.

[What's wrong with liking a loli! No, not loli, she is 36 on her ID!]

Jiang Chen tightly hugged Yao Yao as he felt her warmth and listened to her murmur.

"I feel so lucky."

"Would sister Sun Jiao hit me. Ummm, I'll let her, so she won't be mad. Then, then... I feel so happy."

Suddenly, Yao Yao woke up from her murmuring words.

[Yes, the most important thing is what brother thinks. If he doesn't think I taste good, then... No, No. I need to sell myself. I can definitely do it.]

She tightly clenched her fist as she took a couple of deep breaths and built up the confidence.

[Calmed down?] Jiang Chen heard the murmuring stop.

"Umm."

"Hmm?"

"I, I taste very good! Although I am not confident, I will be very obedient! The moves sister Sun Jiao doesn't want to try, Yao Yao can try! I am not a picky eater. I will resist the pain even if it hurts." Yao Yao's long eyelashes trembled as she closed her eyes tightly, letting go of all her shyness.

Blood burst out from Jiang Chen's nose.

—

"This damn loli lover," Sun Jiao cursed in her mind as she stood outside of the door.

Through the cracks, she almost saw the entire plotline.

Although it was not that she didn't understand Yao Yao's emotion, she did want to drag her into the water...

But, it was still frustrating!

Miss Sun Jiao was so frustrated that she wanted to stomp her feet. But she bit her lips as she decided not to.

It was because she did not want to interrupt them now.

She sighed as she unhappily walked away.

[I'll pretend that is the compensation for this guy to stay here.]

Sun Jiao tried to comfort herself.

[Also, Yao Yao is even easier to "bully."]

A smile carved onto Sun Jiao's lips.

Or, possibly a smirk.

# Chapter 82: Wasteland Economics?

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Loli has three benefits, light, soft, and easy to eat.

Jiang Chen didn't end up eating Yao Yao, although she was already "cooked."

He felt it was not the best idea to eat her now.

[Let her grow a bit more. At least until after she starts to develop. Or at least wait for her to be mentally prepared.]

He wiped the blood from his nose and comforted the now bewildered Yao Yao as he hastily left.

It was the first time he managed to control himself and didn't act like an animal.

—

When night fell, Jiang Chen came to the conference room at the community center and initiated a wireless video conference with Zhao Chenwu.

The light blue particles and lines created the full body image of Zhao Chenwu. The ruthless man smiled and extended his hand to greet him when he saw Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen also smiled and extended his hand, passing through the hologram image.

The hands, of course, didn't touch as it was a gesture passed on in the hologram conference age. Before the start of the conference, Sun Jiao already taught Jiang Chen.

As long as they sat by the table, the hologram would be passed onto the corresponding location in the other conference. Based on the consideration of the importance of real-time communication, Zhao Chenwu sold this set of equipment discounted by 50%. His strategic vision was certainly worth praising, for as it was definitely a move that could pay off in the long term.

What better way to solve the problem than face to face.

Jiang Chen never imagined there could be such a magical equipment in this world. He only saw it in some sci-fi movies before.

"Long time no see Mr. Jiang. To save time, let's get straight to the topic." Compared to modern world negotiations, the negotiations in the apocalypse were short and concise. No one considered flattering words worth. Even close alliances only cared about the individual's own interest as it directly related to their survival.

Also, it cost one crystal per minute to keep this equipment running. The crystal was not the issue, but the lesser the small talk, the better.



"Please go head." Jiang Chen signaled a please gesture.

"I want to increase the trade amount, especially fruit cans. I have a deficit of 1000 cans or more."

Zhao Chenwu waved his fingers as a data board raised onto the middle of the negotiation table that showed this need.

Canned meat needs to be increased to ten thousand, canned fruit increased to eight thousand, compressed cracker increased to an astronomical figure of one hundred thousand pieces and twenty thousand bags of instant noodles needed to be added. Based on the negotiated price, the total trade amount increased to half a million crystals!

Jiang Chen gasped for air.

Half a million. A power armor's cost was only ten thousand crystals.

"Don't mind me for being straight forward, do you have enough crystals for this deal? Or, do you have the ability to absorb this amount of supplies?"

Although the Sixth Street has a large population, there were only so many that could afford these "luxuries."

Zhao Chenwu smiled. He did not hide anything as he waved his hands and a document slid in front of Jiang Chen.

"There is nothing to hide. To respond to the recent abnormal zombie reactions, the group of ten voted on a crusade proposal to eliminate two unknown bacteria sources. The plan is separated into route A and B. The group of ten all had decided to "invest" in initiating this proposal. I'll invest 31 power armors and one spider tank to join the route and acquire 21% of the profit."

"There's profit from clearing out the bacteria source?" Jiang Chen laughed.

He remembered not every zombie had crystals in the back of their heads. Even Roshan only had between 40-50 crystals.

"Yes, and there is a lot." Zhao Chenwu smiled mysteriously and called out a set of data. "The estimated profit of route A is 1.7 million crystals. The cost of ammunition is around 110 thousand, compared to the profit it is almost negligible.

1.7 million crystals?

The number made Jiang Chen jump, but the document Zhao Chenwu threw over soon made him understand the situation.

Regular mutants were unable to resist against the large-scale attacks of the survivors. The crystals on their bodies would all be collected. Also, because of the bacteria, the zombies are filled with energy. Therefore almost all of them have formed crystals, which was also why they became more ferocious.

However, under the firearm's suppression, despite how powerful the zombies were they were still zombies. The Sixth Street could gain massively from this operation! Every zombie would have at least a single crystal. Killing one hundred thousand would be one hundred thousand crystals! Especially if it were closer to the bacteria source, then its energy would be higher for crystal formation. Based on the document, a single zombie could contain up to 20 crystals!

Including the mutants along the way, even if they encounter a Roshan, that thing is like a paper in front of a tank. Except in the city center, the Sixth Street's firepower would not encounter any dangers.

That was not the key point. Once the massive force heads out from the Sixth Street's hideout, following them would be a group of survivors or individuals. They wouldn't dare to steal kills, but under the protection of the force, it would be okay to pick up some scraps. Since they were all part of the force, it would be better for the endless amount of mutants to die as much as possible.

If they encounter something they could not defeat like the Death Claw, they will only need to hide among the forces. The Death Claw would be too scared to attack so many people, even if it did, a single cannon would solve the problem.

Once the average wealth increased, it would bolster spending. Jiang Chen knew that even if he didn't study economy.

"Also, the consumables used in this crusade will be converted into crystals, and so they will seek investments from the population of the Sixth Street. The expected return was estimated to be 15%, in which 1341 "middle class men" would be born. The higher average wealth would increase spending and stimulate the Sixth Street to increase production. The increased production would appreciate the value of crystals as an energy source! This would allow the capable survivors to approach us or even settle here."

It was an excellent blueprint. Although it did sound comical to talk about the economy on the wasteland.

Jiang Chen was at a loss for words before he abruptly opened his mouth.

"If you guys are so powerful, why didn't you attack the city center?"

"Ahem, there is nothing to gain from that. Also, the situation is quite unique in the city center. But, I guarantee you, we will only profit from this crusade!"

He looked blankly at the passionate Zhao Chenwu as a troubled smile appeared on his face.

[Is this the benefit of using energy as the currency?]

The industry's raw materials could be recycled from waste, but

crystals have been the limiting factor for all survival camps.

The industrial process before the war used Hydrogen-3 as a reactor to generate power. Not to say the Hydrogen-3 facility on the moon has already been destroyed to pieces, but there was not a single functional nuclear reactor here. These things were the primary target during a war.

Therefore, the light, efficient, and "renewable" crystal became the primary source of energy and currency. As long as the industry continues to operate, there was no need worry about inflation. Hunt for crystals, purchase goods, increase production, crystal appreciation, which stimulates spending, loops back to hunting and the exploration of dangerous territories.

It was a perfect cycle.

No one wanted to waste bullets on zombies before since they didn't have crystals. Unless they were almost starving to death, not a lot of people risked their lives to hunt for that annoying mutant. However, this generation of zombies, under the influence of the unknown bacteria, formed crystals. Following a great army around the city, before coming back with a bag full of crystals for more reliable equipment would lower the risk of hunting other mutants.

Therefore even these zombies were eradicated, the newly equipped survivors would be able to hunt mutants for crystals.

It was like a spark that reignited the almost distinguished flame.

After this crusade, the Sixth Street would experience a drastic shift.

[Fu\*k, Jiang Chen was jealous, but he was also cautious at the same time.]

Although there was some distance between Sixth Street and here, if its sphere of influence increases, it would be problematic. Since that place was a neutral, open door area, all the survivors would head to it for exchanges of goods.

The equipment upgrade of the survivors nearby was not good news for the newborn Fish Bone.

The bandits, who were previously equipped with rifles, were now upgraded to rocket launcher or even the more expensive laser rifles. It would be detrimental to the base's defense. The current defense of the base was only a few light machine guns as well as some anti-tank weapons and grenade launchers.

Although Jiang Chen wanted to buy a tank and has the money, no one would sell it. These heavy armor firearms were mostly recycled from the battlefield. The quantity was scarce.

It was possible to produce power armor from scratch, but a tank? Even if they had the technology, they didn't have the right conditions.

His eyes lit up as Jiang Chen pondered to think of a way to

upgrade the base's military arms.

If it was not possible to buy it from the Sixth Street, Liuding might be worth a shot?

But in Zhao Chenwu's eyes, he interpreted Jiang Chen's expression as a keen interest in the potential profit of the crusade. A smile emerged on his face, in his eyes, Jiang Chen was ready to reap the benefits.

"What do you think? Mr. Jiang, I believe that you already understand, if we use this golden age to expand the food market, I trust that no one will be interested in the sh\*t like nutrient supply anymore."

# Chapter 83: Helping Each Other

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Jiang Chen was fascinated by the opportunity.

But if the crystals do appreciate, then there would be another problem.

"Crystals will appreciate in value. So you are saying I need to lower the price of the food to expand the market?" Jiang Chen curled up the corners of his mouth. After all this explanation, Zhao Chenwu still had the intention to lower the price of food.

"Ahem, that's precisely the case. But please believe me that after we increase sales, the food trade will bring more profit for your company. Before there would be only one thousand people willing to purchase goods, now in less than a month, it will turn into one thousand people. When the basic survival needs are met, people will start to strive for a higher quality of life. Additionally, if we can capture the market, you can also expand your production capability." Zhao Chenwu locked onto Jiang Chen's eyes.

Umm, okay, Jiang Chen felt awkward.

In theory, if the production base expanded because of economies of scale, the cost would go down. In his case, however, since all the food was transported from the modern world, the cost would be less than 0.1 of a crystal per canned food.

Reducing the price to increase sales volume seemed to fit the goal of the "headquarter."



If the price remained the same, food sales would still increase by a small amount, but the potential profit would be nowhere close to voluntarily lowering the price to attract more sales.

"Oh? This is not a bad idea, I have permission to adjust the price on behalf of the company. You do have to understand however that there is still the cost to transport and produce the food. If the profit margin here is too low, there is no purpose for me to continue to establish a supply station here." He still had the pretend in case this guy constantly asks him to lower the price due to Jiang Chen accepting this initial proposal too easily.

Zhao Chenwu thought it was disrespectful to ask about the other party's costs. But if he doesn't know Fish Bone Food Corporation's production cost, it was hard for him to give a reasonable estimate. He only "guessed" that the expanded production would decrease cost, but he didn't know how much it would go down by.

"The meat cans with an average price of 10, fruit can 20, the compressed cracker maintains the one crystal price, and instant noodle 3. The appreciation of crystals along with the higher purchasing power from the Sixth Street, you won't lose a whole lot.'

"That's a 1/3 discount? Mr. Zhao is certainly giving me a difficult scenario." Jiang Chen had an enigmatic smile. "Purchasing power of the Sixth Street? Then I would be making a loss if I transport the crystals back to the headquarter."

On paper, he only has a supply station here. So, he must stay consistent with the story. The appreciation of crystals was only relative, other than a few things that could not be produced, all other goods would not be any different. If crystals were not traded for goods, then this thing would only be a convenient time travel ticket.

"Ahem, the crystal's appreciation is relative. How about the firearms and construction materials also are reduced by  $\frac{1}{3}$ ? This is pretty close to my cost. Also, isn't your company interested in our technology? Perhaps in this area, we can partner up. It would be best to avoid paying with crystals as this will be the best way to maximize our gain. If I manage to acquire more control within the Sixth Street through this opportunity, I trust that the equipment not permissible to be sold could have workarounds." Zhao Chenwu made his point as his eyes flashed

"Not bad. Interesting proposal." A smile appeared on his face as both parties reached an agreement.

Since this is the case, Jiang Chen brought everything to the table.

"M2 Engine design blueprint, our quote is forty thousand crystals, 1-10 kg bomb production bed blueprint, the quote is ninety thousand crystals. Model 50 electromagnetic pulse cannon, the quote is one hundred and ten thousand crystals. I believe that this technology, common in Wanghai, is not too difficult for Mr. Zhao right?"

These were sensitive military technologies so they would not be stored in public libraries. The only method to obtain the

technology was through purchasing. Sun Jiao estimated the quote based on the benchmark in Liuding town.

Regardless if they have the capabilities to produce the equipment, it was imperative to obtain the technology first, and then slowly digest it.

"Of course not." Zhao Chenwu laughed, the price was reasonable.

Although the Sixth Street prohibited the sale of heavy weapons, the technology aspect was not prohibited to the same extent. A thumb-sized USB could copy all the information and blueprints. How difficult would it be to stop it?

Of course, Zhao Chenwu would not offer the self-developed technology after the war. Just like how he never asked Jiang Chen for the food production technology.

The advancement in technology did not cease after the apocalypse. The well-fed scientists in each survival base all served a purpose. Due to the lack of free flow information, poor survival condition, the difference between the inherited technology, everyone's technology tree was a bit different from the other.

Take the Sixth Street, for example. The self-developed T-3 power armor's combat power even exceeded pre-war levels. However, on the development of airplanes, their progress was close to null. It was a completely different case for Liuding but similar to other survival bases.

"As to the trade amount, if you could manage to absorb it, I'll sell a bit more to you? Let's aim for a quote of seven hundred thousand crystals now based on the new price. It would be for October and November. I think with more supplies, Mr. Zhao could have an easier time expanding the market?" Jiang Chen laughed.

Six times the usual trade amount?

Suddenly, Zhao Chenwu's breath shortened. However, for being a man of power, he quickly recollected himself and remained calm.

He shrugged as Zhao Chenwu said cheerful, "Since my partner has already shown so much good faith, if I don't do anything, it would be inconsiderate."

[It's here, I have been waiting for those words.] Jiang Chen's mouth curled up.

"That's what I think too. So to make sure I can move the seven hundred thousand crystals worth of supplies here, I need your help."

Zhao Chenwu was surprised.

"If your transportation team could move the goods over such a distance, could you not solve a simple problem like this?" It was hard for Zhao Chenwu to believe.

He knew that there was a source near the Fish Bone base, but

because of the distance, it would not pose any threats to the Sixth Street. The neutral area was not a philanthropical society as they had no reason to send out a force to clear out the problem.

"Transportation and combat are two different things. We have the technology to move the goods there, but moving it in would have to depend on me."

Airdrop? Flying carriers? It didn't matter how much Zhao Chenwu guessed as Jiang Chen wouldn't say a word.

He opened his palms as he continued to use his acting as he bullsh\*ted, "I think you know how many crystals I put into this supply station since I bought everything from you. If I couldn't even handle a small problem like this if you were my boss would you want me to stay here? Or, would you switch to another base that would be easier to transport goods, as it would be the more efficient process, wouldn't it? So, for us to continue our partnership, you'll have to help me out."

Then, Jiang Chen's voice lowered as he perplexingly looked at the Zhao Chenwu, who's expression began to turn stern. "I can't promise that the next representative here will still choose Zhao Corporation as the partner, or perhaps even relocate and conduct business with Liuding town. We pride ourselves on efficiency. If I "fail" here, I don't know if the next person in charge would continue my policy. You understand."

Jiang Chen left the words there as he then leaned against his chair.

He didn't finish his words as he has already made the point.

It did make sense. If my subordinate spent so many resources from the trade to invest in the defense infrastructure, if there was the imminent danger he must seek help? (?????) If Jiang Chen got replaced by the Fish Bone headquarter, would the new representative continue the failed policy? Difficult to say.

Zhao Chenwu began to feel unsettled as he already got the taste of the food trade. How would he simply give this up especially when there was a seven hundred thousand crystal deal sitting in front of him? He hoped that he could use this supply to control the food market at the Sixth Street to leverage for more influence in the Group of Ten.

However what he didn't know was, all the hypothetical situation assumed that the "headquarter" existed.

Jiang Chen didn't finish his words but left enough for Zhao Chenwu's imagination.

If he only lied and told half of the context, smart people would complete the lie for you. If he said too much, he would be more prone to getting called out.

"What kind of help do you need? I will handle this," Zhao Chenwu said in a stern voice. His interest was already tied to Jiang Chen. If he lost Jiang Chen as a supplier, all his plans would be interrupted.

He must help him, even if he may make a loss here.

He was waiting for this sentence.

An untraceable faint smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

"10 T-3 power armor, I'll purchase at 110% cost." Jiang Chen didn't scam him as he gave a rather attractive offer.

"Not possible!" Zhao Chenwu stood up as he lost control of his voice.

It was not the problem with the price!

Even with his position of power as a member of the Group of Ten, there was still nine other people keeping a close eye on him. There were a countless amount of small capitalists that have a keen eye on his position, which forces him to be careful.

Even if it was produced from his own factory, every controlled equipment must be documented and registered. They were prohibited from selling and by keeping an eye on each other, it was hard to conduct fraud.

If he crossed the line, there would be severe implications as it practically gave his competitors a reason to attack him.

"Nothing is impossible. Think about it. The risk you take compared to the potential gain, it would be nothing. If I failed, I would just retire. For you, you'll lose a supplier that you trust." Jiang Chen locked onto Zhao Chenwu's eyes.

Zhao Chenwu also fixed his eyes on him.

Finally, this ruthless businessman compromised.

"10 T-3 power armor with a price of 13000 crystals. I'll send 10 slaves with microchips injected along with the power armors. Then I'll report fatalities. You can take the 10 people as long as they don't show up at the Sixth Street ever again."

Zhao Chenwu wryly rubbed his head as he leaned his arm on the table and waved his hand in defeat.

"Excellent, my friend. Be assured that you'll have much to gain from helping me so much." A prevailed smile carved onto Jiang Chen's face, but it was gone within a second. He gave his sincere gratitude to Zhao Chenwu.

"Tell me other things you need. I know the 10 power armors is not enough, but this is the only time!" Since he already broke the rules, it didn't matter how far he went.

As long as no one found out.

"An armored vehicle."



"No problem, one will explode during the mission. 20000 crystals."

"You have to give the equipment first, I have to solve the problem first before I can transport the food here, and then pay based on the new price."

"No problem, I have the patience to wait."

"Also, I would need some high energy vacuum bombs, the portable ones." Seeing Zhao Chenwu's decisive attitude, Jiang Chen was feeling a little ashamed as he grinned sardonically.

"Ok. Along with the one-time use platform, 100 crystals per bomb. I'll just say that I scrapped them. What do you need that for? The zombies can't be suffocated, they also don't have a lot of fat that can be burned.

"It is just for a possible scenario, you don't have to worry about it, and it's a pleasure to work with you?" Jiang Chen had no more requests as he smiled.

"It's a pleasure to work with you... you better not make my investment go in vain!"

Jiang Chen fearlessly stared into Zhao Chenwu's hawk-like vision as he cheerfully laughed. "Be assured, my friend, don't you think we are helping each other out?"

I gave grounds for the price, the least you can do is do me a favor like this.

Helping each other out?

Maybe using each other was a more appropriate term.

# Chapter 84: Zombie Waves

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The goods arrived the next day.

Almost everyone at the Sixth Street was busy with the crusade, so the smuggling went unnoticed.

There were only four people that delivered the goods, and they were all close subordinates of Zhao Chenwu. His assistant Su Lei personally led the team. The guarding soldier transferred the control rights to Jiang Chen and sharply saluted him before they hastily left.

Jiang Chen smiled as he watched the camouflaged armor vehicle and the pitch black metal giants with a fearsome face. He patted the closest guy's shoulder before ordering the new slaves to transport the goods.

If one could compare light armor to kinetic skeletons, then power armor resembled the knight's heavy armor in the middle ages. They were divided into ground type and air drop type with the main difference being the armor's weight and if it was equipped with a shock absorbing turbine engine. The mass of the air drop type was usually less than half a ton, while the ground type weighted one ton or more.

These ten sets of T-3 power armors were the air drop type. They were equipped with a trident-shaped revolving machine gun and ammo packages.

Lu Huasheng was smart enough to design an elevator at the exit. Or else, if they only used rope, it would be tricky to bring up the two meters high, 300-kilogram power armor. The ten slaves clearly did not know how to operate the equipment, and they looked like they were getting ready to enter their caskets.

Obviously, they knew it was illegal to sell those types of equipment.

Since it was illegal...

Their genetic ID must have been registered as died at the Sixth Street already.

As to if they will really die? It would all be up to the man with the cheerful smile.

"Welcome to Fishbone Survival Camp. Trust me, working for me is much more enjoyable than working for anyone else in the world..."

Although it did sound like bullsh\*t, it looked like they won't be dying anytime soon.

Everyone felt relieved as they anxiously followed the man's footsteps.

After giving the responsibility of assigning jobs to Lu Huasheng, Jiang Chen quickly went to find Sun Jiao.

"Weapon and power armor is ready, when should we depart?" Sun Jiao immediately asked when she saw Jiang Chen.

"Within two days. Did you manage to contact the survivor groups around us?"

"No problem. The wireless equipment in the conference room can do that, but what is the point of it?" Sun Jiao asked confused.

"Take them to fight the mobs." He left an unclear response behind.

There were too many survivors living in small groups around the area. If he managed to consolidate them together, there would at least be two to three thousand people. If Fishbone Survival Base wants to break the limitations of their population, they must think about the surrounding survivors.

Those were the survivors that survived through hardships in the apocalypse. Their mental strength was much stronger than ordinary people, or at least more twisted. Their individual combat abilities also far exceeded the slaves in the ghetto. But the tricky part was, they had long ceased to believe in orders and rules, they acted like wolves which are difficult to train.

If you want a dog to listen, a bone plus a rope would be enough.

But for a wolf to listen, a bone and a rope were nowhere enough. The survivors will take the bone away without hesitation but never willingly lower their head and accept the collar.

Unless they possessed absolute power, there was no point in even thinking about uniting together and fighting back.

Showing off their firearms was the second purpose of the crusade.

The best idea was to bring the battlefield together and alleviate the pressure from the waves of zombies. Then, promise them part of the reward to increase their dependency on Fishbone base.

Now that the zombies have all formed crystals, Jiang Chen didn't believe that those survivors would not be interested. Even if Jiang Chen didn't have the heavy firearm, the power armor was more than enough to steamroll through normal zombies. Those survivors have no reason to give up guaranteed profit.

—

The next morning.

The Fishbone base was busy once again. The soldiers rushed to their battle stations. The non-combat unit helped to pack supplies as well as raise polyethylene board onto the front door to create a

defense zone in case the zombies rushed into the base when the door was opened.

Outside the wall, it was also busy. The crowded zombies perfectly illustrated the words 'seas of zombies'. The sheer amount of rotten bodies completely blocked the streets outside.

Strange. It was as if the zombies from the entire area was stuffed onto this one street.

"Weapon system, functional. Turbine engine, functional. And energy stick, functional!" Jiang Chen tirelessly checked the data within the electronic helmet. Although he had experience with power armors in the virtual reality training chamber and had the opportunity to familiarize himself with the actual armor yesterday, being locked in the "metal box" made him feel unsettled.

The pitch black paint, the vigorous and light armor's aerodynamic shape, the trident-shaped revolving machines gun, and the tactical rifle placed at the waist. Jiang Chen was almost fortified to his teeth.

It certainly did look cool, but it was surprisingly difficult to put on.

Sun Jiao glanced at Jiang Chen with worried eyes. She then took a deep breath and waved at the guard on the wall.

The guard saluted and quickly positioned himself by the machine

gun.

Sun Jiao will be the leader for this operation.

"Be prepared to depart. Open your weapon system, and make sure the zombies don't break our formation. All of our supplies are in the car. Am I understood?"

"Understood!" The eight armored soldiers uniformly shouted as they put on their helmets.

"Open the gate!" Sun Jiao shouted and signaled before she also put on her helmet.

The metal gate slowly rose. As if they smelt the delicious scent of food, the zombies turned their hollow eyes in the direction of the door.

Tatatatata!

"Fire!"

The machine guns on the two watchtowers began to unload their ammunition. The orange light split countless bodies of zombies as it shredded the already crippled body into more pieces. However, it was futile as the waves of zombies howled and rushed to the door.

"Charge!"



The team in power armor formed a triangle, protecting the armored vehicle in the middle. They then ripped a hole in the sea of zombies. Zombies with missing limbs shook on the ground. If their brains were still intact, zombies would not die.

But there was no time to finish them off. Under the power of the machine gun on the watch tower and the armored soldiers' continuously firing revolving machine gun, the flow of indestructible metal trampled through the corpses of the undead.

Even through metal, the sticky feeling of blood and meat on Jiang Chen's feet made his stomach churn. But he was no longer afraid of the frightening zombies.

They are no longer humans.

Some were not humans to begin with.

When the reinforced front armor collided with the zombies, who had attempted to bite him, the power of the armor's technology was truly demonstrated. The turbine engines on the waist and arms spat out mystic blue flames. The zombies futilely scratched and bit on the cold armor as Jiang Chen maximized the thrust of the engines.

The team maintained their formation as they moved forward, pushing the zombies back.

If the charge formation stopped, they then must face the dire situation of being surrounded by zombies. Although the regular zombies would not penetrate the armor if they accumulated and gained a numerical advantage, they could, however, deform the power armor as easily as they flipped cars.

Even if they had the absolute advantage on equipment, no one dared to lose concentration as they used the fire power of their armors to disperse the sea of zombies.

But it was impossible to kill all the zombies even if they used all of their ammunition. The only thing they needed to do was to break through, not waste all the ammunition on these dead things.

The zombies squeezed through and collided with the armored vehicle, but they got ran over right away. The thick and heavy tire left a frightening mark on the ground. The 20mm machine gun on top of the vehicle continued to fire as the bullets penetrated the zombies' withered bodies, exploding it into pieces.

Finally, the entire force forcefully created an opening through the sea of zombies as they trampled through the twitching bodies and out of the zombie-infested street.

"How do you feel." A caring voice passed through the private channel.

"I am okay." Jiang Chen took several deep breaths as he tried to calm his pounding heart.

He closed the revolving machine gun on his right hand and pulled out the tactical rifle on his waist. Everyone else followed. They no longer needed to maintain a high concentration of firepower after they broke through.

The zombies still rushed towards them, but they were much more sparse. It seemed to have matched his guess that the zombies all consciously gathered near the base. Once they passed another street, they could barely see any zombies.

"This is odd."

"Be careful, stay alert! Open the electric life detection device."

"Roger."

"No mutant signal within the 500-meter radius."

...

The series of reporting made the public channel sound chaotic.

Usually speaking, the drastic decrease in zombie concentration could only mean one thing. The existence of a powerful mutant was nearby. Although zombies hunted for any living creature, most of their prey were creatures with a similar life energy to humans. If they encountered an one hundred crystal monster or the nest of a mutant, zombies would subconsciously move away from that direction.

But the situation was abnormal. Not only mutants, but there wasn't even a single cockroach on the street.

The broken advertisement board, the abandoned cars...

They were the only living creatures on the street.

He shook his left arm to get rid of the sticky feeling of blood as he watched the empty street.

The ominous feeling was more and more apparent.

# Chapter 85: This is the Apocalypse

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There was no powerful mutant nearby, but the reality seemed to say otherwise.

It felt like a hand had drawn the spread out zombies together to surround them.

"The zombie concentration ahead is zero, I feel like something is off." Seeing the life detection map at the right corner of his pupil, Jiang Chen can't help but raised his eyebrows.

Disregarding the possibility of mutant.

Zombies were not exactly dead as they still maintain some features of a live creature. For example, their understanding of survival space. The zombie's distribution was highly concentrated in the city center and spreads out in all directions from that point on. The asexually produced zombies moved outwards from the crowded city center to the rural area. In most cases, the relatively less concentrated areas would rarely produce a sea of zombies.

But the zombies seemed to have gathered together as they surrounded the entire base. The result was that after they manage to break through, the streets were empty.

Sun Jiao frowned as she was also uncertain.

"That's right, something is off."

However, it was futile to overthink right now as the armored vehicle broke through the sea of zombies and began to accelerate. The armored soldiers also activated the wheels on their feet and started the turbine engine behind their back. As they changed from a running stance to a gliding stance, they immediately began moving alongside the armored vehicle.

[Balance system, functional. Fu\*k, I forgot to check this thing.] Jiang Chen cursed as sweat rolled down. It was functional or else it would have been problematic.

"Be careful of your surroundings, free fire." Sun Jiao voiced transmitted through the public channel.

"Affirmative."

The arrow like formation pushed forward, into the middle of the highway. The vehicles in the way were either pushed away or rolled over.

Their surrounding was filled with deafening silence. Other than the missile's homing noise there were no other noises. Everyone was alert, holding the tactical in shooting position.

"Weird, there is not even a single mutant." A soldier complained in the public channel.

"Did they hide or something?"

"Don't be distracted, hold your position!"

"Yes!" The two soldiers immediately shut their mouth.

Could it be because of the unknown bacteria in the air?

Jiang Chen had a feeling something was not right. A bacteria that could make a bloodthirsty mutant afraid would not be as simple as it sounded.

After three kilometers, the team stopped in front of an apartment building surrounded by barbed wire.

It was an ancient building, like most buildings on the wasteland. The paint on the surface was already erased from the aftershock of the nuclear explosion, with only the gray concrete walls left. The wall had some old paint sprayed words.

Through the pitch black, a machine gun slanted against the window could barely be made out, and cloth replaced the glass on the windows.

On the roof of the building, vegetation covered in plastics to make what looked like soilless culture. This was where most of the survivor groups received their food. But in the radiation filled apocalypse, you wouldn't expect a seed to produce a single fruit.

These fruits, with uncertain toxicology, still had a market on the Sixth Street. A lot of factories would purchase these in bulk quantities at a low price, and then sell the non-toxic ones in the luxury market. The toxic ones would be placed in extraction machines for vitamin, vegetable proteins, and other substances to produce high-quality grade A or B nutrient supply. (Compared to the nutrient supply created through the blood and fat of mutant and zombies, it was more "tasty" and "nutritious".)

The situation here was similar to Fish Bone Base as the zombies surrounded the building. But quantity wise, it was significantly less than the zombies around the base.

It was a frightening prospect, but not because of some zombies.

Did zombies possess intelligence? Or, was a higher intelligence controlling them?

Despite this, there was not much suspense in the battle as some zombies did not reach the critical state.

Although the zombies did possess crystals, the organic nature of their body meant that they were still regular zombies. Despite how hard they tried, they did not have the defense of the power armor.

A few gunshots finished the annoying zombies as they approached the apartment building.

There was a wooden board with some crooked words.



<Private property, do not enter>

[Psh, what?]

"Code 01 survivor group, the life detection device indicates a total of 30-40 people," Sun Jiao reported to Jiang Chen through the private channel.

"What does code 01 mean? That's an ugly name," Jiang Chen mocked.

"...I gave them the name. Survivor groups usually don't give their home a name as the desire to expand and need for land are minimal. The goal was to survive." Sun Jiao walked up to ring the bell and backed up.

Momentarily, the door opened as a cautious looking middle-aged man carefully stepped out.

"Who are you guys?" His face had suspense and fright written all over it. The rifle in his hands trembled as he knew his rifle could not even break their armor.

The only thing that could damage the power armor was probably the dusty recoil-less cannon in the back of the room.

"We are from the nearby Fish Bone base," Jiang Chen took off his

mask and said emotionlessly.

"What are you guys doing here?" The middle-aged man cautiously asked. He, of course, saw the group of people eradicate the zombies. The heavy firepower deterred any thought of resistance.

"I trust that you already realized the unusual zombie activity. Under the influence of the unknown bacteria, these zombies would exhibit high attack behaviors. The reliable report indicated that the unknown bacteria level is increasing in the air, so we have decided to eliminate the bacteria source." Jiang Chen tried to make his tone sound friendly.

But the next sentence made Jiang Chen furious.

"What does that have to do with us?" Still the cautious and apathetic voice.

"You are asking what does that have to do with you?" Jiang Chen was shocked. He did not look angry as he laughed instead. "Do you know that the source is closer to you?"

The middle-aged man was speechless, but he felt that Jiang Chen was not as vicious as other bandits. He then prompted up the courage and argued back.

"But then it has more influence on you guys. Or else you guys wouldn't be out here. We don't need your help, so don't bother

us..."

The middle-aged man already has a plan. Since they were willing to take care of the trouble, then they can go. Although the odd bacteria certainly gave him a headache, what can he do? He'll just hide there. If other people can't take it anymore, then they'll send their forces out.

Although those zombies had crystals behind the back of their head, they couldn't advance forward and stop to collect the crystals at the same time. Why does he have to go with them if he could just pick up scraps that are left behind?

Jiang Chen was at a loss, but then he started to laugh.

He saw through the man's deceitful eyes and could guess what was on his mind.

Shameless, too shameless. Haha.

[It certainly expanded his worldview that people could be this selfish. The problem is already in your backyard, and you are still waiting for a "dumbass" to make the first move so you can take advantage of their reward afterward? If I didn't show up here, you were just going to wait here to die?

Wait, this is the apocalypse.]

Jiang Chen sudden realized. He almost thought he was on the

negotiation table with Wang Dehai or 361 corporations.

Then, his eyes turned grim.

"What, what do you want?" The middle-aged man sensed a glimpse of hostility on Jiang Chen's face as he cautiously opened his mouth. At the same time, he signaled the people behind him.

The window opened on top of the building as a black barrel extended out and was aimed at the armored vehicle.

"Boss, I have been locked in by an anti-tank weapon. Requesting permission to fire." The driver hastily reported into the public channel.

Sun Jiao immediately lifted the tactical rifle and aimed at the person on top of the building. The power armor soldiers all engaged in a firing position.

Sun Jiao was in command during combats, but Jiang Chen decided in regards to the neutral forces.

If Jiang Chen ordered, Sun Jiao was fully confident that they could wipe these people off of the wasteland.

The middle-aged man was struggling too as he stared at Jiang Chen. He was not a friendly character. He knew the highly mobile power armor would be hard to hit. So he dared to risk his own life to signal his subordinate to aim at the armored vehicle, clearly

carrying plenty of supplies.

He was betting. Betting on the fact that Jiang Chen would not risk the highly valuable armored vehicle and the countless amount of supplies for their irrelevant life.

However, Jiang Chen laughed. He knew exactly what the middle-aged man's intentions were.

[He has the audacity to bet? To save ammunition and not fire a single bullet at zombies, but turn the gun on us who're planning on eliminating the source?]

But Jiang Chen did not look surprised anymore. There was only a grimace was left in his vision.

"Perhaps it was my mistake to negotiate with you," Jiang Chen slowly said the words as he shut his helmet.

The action scared the middle-aged man to death. If revealing the face meant sincerity to negotiate, then closing the helmet...

Speaker open, the icy words echoed through the entire street.

"I'll only ask once. Surrender, or face death!"

The tactical rifle lowered.

Replacing them was ten raised revolving machine guns. The trident shaped machine gun rotated rapidly...

# Chapter 86: I don't reason

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I'm unreasonable.

Because you don't understand what is the reason.

Surrender, or face death.

A simple yet oppressive statement somehow easily solved the problem.

Before Jiang Chen could count to three, the middle-aged broke down and threw the rifle in his hands to the ground. He covered his head and surrendered.

[I won't let you not surrender. A recoilless cannon had the audacity to resist us? I will gladly trade the vehicle for your thirty worthless lives, do you dare to trade with me?]

His audacity was based on Jiang Chen's willingness to negotiate, but Jiang Chen no longer wished to discuss.

All the survivors stood outside with faces of humiliation as they looked at the "invaders". Jiang Chen was not here to capture captives, as he still expected these people to peacefully integrate. Even if they brought them back, there was no place to imprison them. Perhaps it would even cause resistance from other survivor groups.

These survivor groups were not completely powerless to be able to survive this long. If this group had the recoilless cannon, the next group might have laser rifles. That weapon could pose a threat to the power armors as the C plastic steel formed armor could deflect bullets, but it would not be able to withstand high energy laser penetration.

Jiang Chen no longer wasted his time on the middle-aged man called Zhao Baodong as he directly gave out his demand. 50% of your force will temporarily join Jiang Chen's team.

Zhao Baodong's eyes immediately popped when he heard the proposition. Just as he was about to refuse, he was met with an icy stare, so he forced a smile and swallowed his sentence back.

After this, the survivor group led by Zhao Baodong had a number – 02 (?????), the 8 riflemen joined Jiang Chen's team acquired the numbers 021-028.

It was much more convenient as Jiang Chen was too lazy to remember their names. He could just order them using numbers.

After the stick, for the best effect, it was to throw a carrot. Jiang Chen told them about the "good news". After the battle ends, they could collect crystals. Since they wielded the power armors, it was troublesome to bend down.

Zhao Baodong became energetic when he heard he was responsible for picking up the money. Even if Jiang Chen added a sentence that half of it will be Fish Bone base's spoil of war, it



would not extinguish his passion.

Jiang Chen disdainfully looked at this short-sighted person as he gave him another task. The task was to convince, or, to order the other survivor groups to join the force. If they refuse, it was okay to just beat their a\*\*es.

Jiang Chen didn't bring his force too close for the remainder of the trip as he only needed to show off his firepower from afar to successfully convince the other survivor groups. Even the stubborn survivor groups surrendered with white flags when the 20mm heavy machine gun shot above them and they experienced the splash of concrete dust.

Their firepower was not on the same level.

Fortunately, everyone was smart. No one held the unrealistic fantasy of "staying behind to scavenge" or "they are too afraid to shoot." After all, 18th year has passed by since the world turned into an apocalypse.

A total of 154 people, the force suddenly felt cumbersome.

"Why do we need so many people?" Sun Jiao secretly asked Jiang Chen in the private channel.

"Not useful for combat, useful for strategic purposes." Jiang Chen's answer was crisp. Although she was confused, she didn't say anything more.

"To be honest, you were quite manly when you acted fearsomely. My heart was beating really fast," Sun Jiao teased Jiang Chen in the private channel.

Although it was said in a joking voice, she didn't lie. When she heard Jiang Chen's coarse and grim <Machine Gun Armed> in the public channel, her scalp felt a tingling sensation.

She reminisced the first time they met and how much the man she loves grew. She was proud.

That feeling was similar to how Jiang Chen felt when she became more "civilized."

"..."Jiang Chen ignored her naughtiness. He knew she was teasing him as he will "take care" of her once they return.

-

If the survivors could control the inherent human flaws and stand from the perspective of the entire species. Disregarding the bacteria source, the world would return to human control after a few days.

But it was futile when the elites and powerful all boarded the ship to the distant "land of hope", leaving a world of chaos. A world no one had the interest to rebuild.

Why was there no interest?

The farming culture's utmost desire for land was because land produced food. But after the blessing from the nuclear and biological weapons, not a single piece of land was arable on this planet. The mutants didn't even dare to eat the mutated and crooked plants, what's the purpose of the land now?

The ironic part was that the ones who started the war left as they didn't need to bear the consequences of the war. They stepped onto the space colonization ship and carried with them the supposed hope for the civilization, leaving the desolated land for a new world yet to be tarnished.

Of course, it was pointless to say that now.

The point is that there is no purpose in expecting that these people will understand. The people with foresight either got in the ship, suicided, or already became a leader of a piece of land. The refugee like survivors that hid the darkness, although free, only had freedom left.

Jiang Chen, who thought through everything, no longer reasoned with the remaining survivors. He used his suppressive stance to force them to oblige. If he didn't give them the option to negotiate, it was much simpler.

"In the end, this is for me." Like this, every survivor convinced themselves.

"There will also be crystals." Like that, every survivor encouraged themselves.

When they were on the battlefield, there was nowhere to go. Run? Who could out run the zombies without the genetic vaccine? Separating from the force was a death penalty, an internal conflict now meant death.

Everyone, forced to work together, did not encounter many obstacles. Although the zombies howled and dashed at the group, with the help of the buildings as a natural barrier and the armored tank as the main force, the group pushed the sea of zombies back and moved forward.

Between life and death, every survivor was energized with the passion of fighting. No one saved bullets, and no one tried to hide behind their teammates.

The latter part of the combat was hard fought. After leaving behind 17 bodies, the thousands of zombies surrounding the force were all eradicated in the street. The last obstacle to the targeted area was quickly cleared.

The zombies in the area were easily eradicated as most of the zombies were surrounding Fish Bone's base. There were some zombies around the bacteria source, but it was nowhere as "crowded."

He shook the blood and sticky content off of his armor and ordered the survivors to rest here and collect the crystals.

Hearing the "leader's" order, the survivors erupted in cheerful joy. They dashed to the already dead or crippled zombies as they pulled out their dagger and started to collect.

It was the time to harvest. There was an estimate of at least three hundred thousand crystals! For the survivors that lived off of a few crystals and ran pettily to the Sixth Street or other survival bases to exchange for necessities, it was an unimaginable amount of wealth.

Even if they had to turn in half of it, why did that matter? Since they were the primary force in the battle, it was already a generous offer.

As to the people who died ...

In the Apocalypse, death was an ordinary thing.

The previously sad looking survivors suddenly became grateful towards Jiang Chen.

Some people were weird creatures. If you were nice to them, they would take everything for granted. Even if they were the slightest bit discontent, they would be upset. But if you started off with a gun to their head and gave them a slap in the face when they showed any signs of resistance, they will hate you. Though as long as are nice to them, by just the smallest margin, they'll immediately act sincerely and thankfully.

It may be an exaggeration, but the meaning stays the same. Clinically, it is called Stockholm syndrome. The deceitful and short sighted has been particularly prone to this disease. A civilized negotiation would only make them think that you were afraid.

Oppress, conquer, and then train.

Seeing the grateful look from the survivors, Jiang Chen wanted to slap himself.

Why didn't he think through such a simple concept?

Within this half an hour, all the crystals were collected. Jiang Chen generously offered everyone there a piece of compressed cracker. He told them that after eating a piece, drinking some water will make them full. He then stated that all the survivor groups participating in the mission could obtain the privilege to trade for this type of cracker at a price of one crystal on the condition that they maintain a good relationship with Fish Bone.

After finishing the sentence, the survivors were even more ecstatic as they almost took him for a God. Although the Sixth Street sold compressed crackers as well, it was not safe to travel far away from the apocalypse.

The leader of each survivor groups simultaneously expressed that from then on. They will be under the guidance of Fish Bone survival base.

Sun Jiao felt delighted as she mischievously looked at her man accepting the gratitude and respect from the people.

[It would be perfect if only he were not a player...]

Although she knew that this point was unrealistic.

-

The high spirited team embarked on the road that they previously could only sneak through.

Unafraid of zombies, unafraid of mutants. Under the command of glory and wealth, humans regained their long forgotten dignity.

Although they had encountered Roshans multiple time, Sun Jiao had obviously prepared for that.

She grabbed a 72mm anti-vehicle cannon from the back of the powered vehicle. The two-meter long pitch black barrel had a frightening vibe.

She activated the anchor device as the steel rod penetrated into the concrete road. Sun Jiao fired the cannon. Before the shell hit the ground, the brain was already shattered into pieces of black and white.

She already simulated this move countless times in the virtual reality system as the cannon hit right on target.

In the rural area, the most dangerous mutant would be the Roshan. However, under their oppressive technology, even the Roshan was only a pile of meat. It is rumored that city center has even more powerful and dangerous zombies, but even Sun Jiao has never seen them before since ordinary people would not visit the city center for fun.

The team maintained their speed with the goal of reaching the border of the bacteria source by noon.

But when they were almost there, Jiang Chen had to stop the team.

"The unknown bacteria concentration level already increased to 37. The thick cloud in front is unsettling. The yellowish-green particles look like bacteria stuck together. No one will survive in that condition except for the soldiers in power armor," With a stern look, Sun Jiao reported to Jiang Chen.

"It is a problem. But before I left, I did somewhat guess we would encounter this." Jiang Chen's mouth curled up.

Since it was a bacteria source, there was no reason that the area surrounding it would not be infiltrated with bacteria yet to spread. Although he didn't know the bacteria would evenly spread around the source of the bacteria in an egg shape, that didn't change anything.



It was a wise decision to purchase the high energy vacuum bomb.

"Although I didn't do my research, nor do I know what can counter the bacteria, I do believe that as long as they are carbon based cells, it would be scared of fire. Air is everywhere? Then I'll even burn the air.

# Chapter 87: Burn!

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Burn!

The bacteria source seemed to be at the bottom of a deep hole in the ground. The hole was placed right in front of the area hospital's empty lot. Due to the high concentration of bacteria, the bacteria stuck together to form visible chunks and filled the egg like area with an ominous and dangerous yellowish-green color.

To solve this, Jiang Chen's strategy was simple and ruthless.

He commanded the survivors to surround the area in a 1000 meter diameter, which was precisely the location where the bacteria concentration would not exceed the human immune system's limit. He ordered them to stay put 2000 meters away from the central area. Once they hear the explosion, they then should quickly rush into their battle positions.

He then ordered another group of survivors to install the one-time launch pads on 12 roofs, in different directions, 2000 meters away from the source. Each person would also be armed with a high energy vacuum bomb, as thick as two legs.

The zombies who periodically rushed to the top of the roof fell under the cross fire. Jiang Chen did not act cheap at all, as he offered the general ammo supply in the armored vehicle to all the survivors.

All the crystals collected will be stored on the armored vehicle

with a ledger. After the end of the battle, each of the squad leaders would then obtain their fair share. As to the consumed ammunition, Jiang Chen would only charge half of the cost benchmarked to the Sixth Street's price. It was a battle for all of them.

The armored vehicle was parked on the main road. It also fired at the zombies, who were drawn by an unknown force.

As they approached the bacteria source, the zombies were more ferocious. This was demonstrated through their increased speed and reaction. But, they were still no match for bullets. On top of that, all the survivors had surprisingly great aim, which eliminated any need for close range combat.

"Prepare to enter," Sun Jiao took a deep breath as she spoke into the public channel. Then, she looked at Jiang Chen.

"Roger."

A sneer flashed across Jiang Chen's face as he took out the firing terminal for the high energy vacuum bombs from the back of the armored vehicle.

<Launch Angle: 75

Launch distance: 1300m

Initiate.>

"Burn!" Jiang Chen firmly pressed the <Initiate> button.

12 missiles, trailing white flames, rose in the distance. The curvature of the trajectory aimed directly at the bacteria filled area.

When the bomb reached 1200 meters.

The bright white light had ignited the entire sky before the deafening explosion shook the ground.

The highly concentrated fuel almost instantly draw out all the oxygen in the area and mercilessly burned in the sky. Despite how resilient the bacteria was, there was no way it could survive under the scorching heat that could melt through steel.

When the thick smoke replaced the bacteria cloud, what remained was scorching ground and air.

Even standing 2000 meters away, the mixture of cold and hot air could be sensed from afar.

"Initiate gliding position! Go, quick!" Sun Jiao shouted in the public channel as she was the first to valiantly dash in with her machine engaged.

Flashes of pitch black power armor passed through the thick

smoke and accelerated at full speed to the targeted area.

The bacteria had been fully destroyed. Even the unknown bacteria in the vicinity were pushed away by the shockwave.

They must clean out the area before the bacteria regenerated and covered the area again.

2000 meter distance took only a matter of seconds for the fully mobilized T-3.

But at this moment, something unexpected occurred.

An unstable static noise suddenly occupied the communication channel.

"What's going on! Fu\*k-"

"EMP?!"

The public channel went offline due to the automatic activation of the EMP absorber. It blocked and separated all communication signals.

Under the unsuspected EMP disturbance, all the electronic devices were temporarily disabled. The most crucial armor balance system was affected as the team in high velocity began to fall to the ground.

"Break! Close the power system!" The communication channel was blocked, so Sun Jiao shouted out of her speaker.

"Fu\*k! My power system is offline!" Jiang Chen could only watch as he dashed into the thick smoke and then immediately over the daunting hole, smashing into the area hospital.

Concrete debris and glass shards broke all over the ground.

The high impact forced the physical protection system to activate, which shut down all turbine engines. Jiang Chen, still dizzy from the impact, felt his ribs were almost dislocated as he tried to stand up.

Although power armor was usually equipped with EMP resistance function, the temporary disturbance was inevitable. With the exception that the EMP absorber was opened voluntarily, not triggered open.

[But who the fu\*k thought there would be an EMP here?]

Suddenly, Jiang Chen was on alert. Reflexively lifting his left hand to guard himself.

Bang!

There was high impact followed by a deafening screech. The

sharp blade even penetrated through the reinforced plastic steel armor.

The scythe like teeth fiercely opened. The eyes resembled death and blood. The most fearful close range creature on the wasteland - Death Claw.

It scared Jiang Chen enough to respond instantly by kicking at the Death Claw's chest. But the firm chest of the Death Claw easily absorbed the 1-ton force from the kick as it countered by furiously swiping it's talon, like a butchering knife, at the neck of its prey.

Without time to hesitate, the nitrogen armor on his left arm was immediately activated. The hammer like vortex airflow pushed away from the critical hit of the Death Claw. The Death Claw's talon smashed onto the ground, two feet from his head, and rocks flew from the impact.

He caught the opportunity as he restarted the turbine engine and pushed it to maximum output. He desperately tried to gain lateral distance from the side.

If the first hit missed, then there would be a second hit!

Death Claw immediately flew at Jiang Chen. But Jiang Chen was not to be underestimated. Before the revolving machine gun could be activated, his right hand pulled out the tactical rifle.

Tatata!

The bullets that could destroy concrete did nothing to the Death Claw.

But the suppressive shooting managed to hold the Death Claw down. Natural instinct forced the Death Claw to protect its vulnerable eyes, ducking into a barrier before circling back around to Jiang Chen's position.

The clip was shot empty, there was no time to reload.

Jiang Chen, finally regaining his balance, immediately dropped the tactical rifle in his hand and pulled out a dagger. Then he backed up against the wall.

It was extremely unwise to go into close combat with a Death Claw. Especially when he was against a wall with nowhere to retreat.

But -

Seeing that Jiang Chen dropped the rifle, the Death Claw grasped on the opportunity and dashed over. Its dagger like claws were ready to rip through the prey's chest.

But all of a sudden, the prey disappeared out of thin air.

Death Claw, unable to react, smashed right into the wall.



<Death Claw's weakness is its spine with minimal armor and its eyes.>

In a blink, Jiang Chen returned to the same spot and stabbed the dagger into its back without hesitation. The blade penetrated deep inside the Death Claw's back and chopped through its spine.

The parts below the Death Claw was paralyzed as it only let out a faint screeched.

With both hands on the dagger, Jiang Chen slashed down and cut open its back.

Slash.

Blood, meat, and organs spilled everywhere. But because it was an animal, it didn't make him sick.

After killing the Death Claw, Jiang sat down and tried to catch his breath. His entire body was drenched in sweat.

To use interdimensional travel twice put an unbelievable amount of stress on his body. The sharp nerve pain almost made him pass out.

The entire fight happened within seconds, but he felt the threat of death twice.

The turbine engine's homing noise became more visible.

Through the thick smoke, Sun Jiao dashed to Jiang Chen and saw the Death Claw's body.

"Are you okay!" Sun Jiao quickly helped Jiang Chen up and opened her mask, her voice trembling.

"Ahem, I am still alive aren't I. I just used that ability, the one you know, so I am a bit dizzy." Jiang Chen weakly smiled. Being hugged through the armor did not feel good at all.

"You scared me to death. Who would have thought there would be an EMP... Wait, why was there an EMP? And how did the Death Claw peacefully interact with the zombies?" Jiang Chen suddenly realized the oddity as questions began to burst out.

Death Claw, with every part of its body designed for killing, had no allies except for its species in the apocalypse. Every other creature was their prey, including zombies. In fact, the slow moving zombies were their primary food source. Normally, the mutant's natural immunity was enough to go against the zombie bacteria, which is unlike humans who still required vaccines to enhance their body's functions.

"Perhaps we can only find out once we go in. A massive wave of zombies is surrounding us. Seems like they are trying to get reinforcements here." Sun Jiao looked perplexedly at the daunting hole outside of the area hospital.

Orange flame sparked from the hole. Following it were periodic explosions.

Jiang Chen used all of his energy to stand up and pick up his tactical rifle from the ground. He then reloaded and attached it to his waist. He opened the life detection device and adjusted it to maximum capability.

The dense red dots were closing in on their defense line.

"You take the other eight power armored soldiers to defend here. I'll go in."

"No! You're crazy! Do you know what's inside?" Sun Jiao shouted.

"I can escape any time in there. But you can't." Jiang Chen looked seriously into Sun Jiao's eyes. "Trust me, if I say I can come back, I will be able to return."

With the ability of the interdimensional bracelet, as long as it was not a one hit kill, he would be able to escape from any danger. But this was obviously not the case for Sun Jiao. Despite her wealth of combat experience and strong combat power, she was still human after all.

Especially this time, the situation was completely unknown. Maybe the Sixth Street force could use its massive power to fill the hole with human lives, but Jiang Chen didn't have the privilege.

Even losing just one single power armor would be an insurmountable loss for the Fishbone base because Jiang Chen won't be able to acquire such a dominant force again. At least not for the time being. Even if Zhao Chenwu wanted to help him, he wouldn't dare to. Since it was already unreasonable for him to have lost 10 power armors, for him to lose a few more, even retards would suspect he broke the rules by selling prohibited weapons.

Especially the production quantity for these were low to begin with.

So he had to go alone.

Before he left, he already considered this possibility.

"..." Sun Jiao's lips trembled as she locked her eyes on Jiang Chen.

"We don't have time to waste. Help me defend the area for the next 2 hours. If I don't come out, then this mission has failed. Although disappointing, you must give up on the survivors. Use the power armor's ability, jump between the buildings, and escape.

Sun Jiao grabbed Jiang Chen's power armor collar and put his face in front of hers as she said ferociously.

"I won't go, and I mean it!"

"Don't be like this. I said that this is not threatening to me." Jiang Chen forced a smile as he looked into Sun Jiao's fierce eyes, locking onto them. Even if the power armor was almost destroyed, he could escape to the other world and then put the power armor into the storage dimension to avoid any suspicion.

"Then would you be able to come out?! Would you be able to return to this world?! You, you..." The gorgeous face became twisted due to her sadness. Her distraught shocked Jiang Chen.

True.

[Even if I escape, the next time he came back it would be in the same spot. The modern world would not have any place to fix the power armor, without the power armor, once the bacteria reoccupy this space...

It would mean death if he came back.

But he was already here, would he just go back now? He was not willing. If the bacteria concentration continued to get worse, the Fishbone Survival Base would be uninhabitable. If they left, that means months of effort would go down the drain.

[Fu\*k, I'll risk it!]

He had no time to hesitate. He made up his mind, took a deep breath, and looked straight into Sun Jiao's shaking eyes.

"I promise I will be back. Give me two hours."

"But..."

"Be good." Jiang Chen smiled as he patted her helmet to comfort her.

[I will not give this place up.]

He promised in silence. Then, he let go of the still stunned Sun Jiao.

"Defend the entrance for me. Once the two-hour limit is up, evade into the building to hide. Right now, it is still day time. Once the bacteria source is destroyed, the zombies should stop. Trust me! I can do it!"

He turned around.

Slowly inhaling, Jiang Chen looked at the dark pit and jumped down.

# Chapter 88: PAC Remains

---

<True height: 240m>

"Initiating shock absorber."

The turbine engine began to fire downwards as Jiang Chen stared at the speed monitor. Only when the downward velocity decreased and stabilized to 10m/s did he stop increasing the power output.

The pitch black hole extended vertically down into the ground. The blue engine flame, lighting up the surrounding, revealed a metallic wall. It seemed like this was the entrance to a secret facility, but the door showed "something" had already stricken through.

He took a deep breath as he began to check the power armors equipment.

"EMP Absorber initiated. Weapon system, functional. Left armor, minor damage...this shouldn't be a problem. Communication...still offline."

As both feet landed on the ground, Jiang Chen closed the engine and then immediately fired out a sticky luminescent bomb that completely lit up the dark space.

"Oxygen concentration relatively low. The radiation level is nearly zero. The bacterias need to be in a low oxygen environment

to reproduce? No wonder the bacteria outside didn't seem to reproduce."

Jiang Chen suddenly remembered something from a long time ago. Knowledge he almost gave back to the bald teacher.

"When the cell is dividing, the DNA is in its most unstable condition, so it requires a radiation free environment?"

"Yes, speaking of this, the zombie bacteria seems to be a mutated version of the radiation eliminating bacteria." Jiang Chen recollected the information he gathered from the very first building he landed in, in the apocalypse.

"That's exactly it. The radiation eliminating bacteria was effective before and possessed the ability to resist exposure to radiation. However, because of uncontrolled mutation during the cell division stage, it turned into bacteria that could turn people or creatures into zombies." Even though it was a slim possibility, it did happen, and it spread. "But the unknown bacteria seems to be from the same source as the zombie bacteria? The only difference being that the reproducing condition is now more strict."

Of course, it was only a theory, there was no scientific backing.

"The wall in this place is made of lead?" Jiang Chen walked forward as he held his tactical rifle up, exploring deep inside the tunnel.



Lead? Also built below the hospital. This place must be a nuclear fallout shelter. What kind of monster could create a massive hole like this inside a nuclear fallout shelter that's capable of guarding against a nuclear bomb?

Jiang Chen began to feel anxious as his trigger finger moved steadily.

Because of the fear of a sudden EMP strike, Jiang Chen didn't engage in a gliding position as the fall was still in his memory.

The tunnel was pitch black without a single ray of light. He didn't know if there were anyone alive inside. Just like what Sun Jiao said to him before, not every survival base was successful, and not every survival base stored people alive. In this era, people's purpose was to save a genetic code. As long as the species is not extinct...the genetic code is saved for the people who designed the survival base.

Because he restarted the EMP absorber, the life detection device could not be used. There was nothing more fearful than the unknown.

Every step on the dry concrete floor had a crisp sound to it. The monotone sound echoed within the hollow tunnel, which made the place even more frightening. Due to the time constraint, however, Jiang Chen didn't dare to ponder, he had to keep going.

His vision locked onto the crosshairs of the tactical rifle, ready to react to any unexpected danger.

After 5 minutes, he was at the end of the tunnel.

The road ended with a gray gate made out of an unknown material. Jiang Chen spent a while using the flashlight to search for an open button but failed to do so.

In the middle of the giant door, red words were printed.

<PAC>

<Passing on the generational glory.>

What is this?

"Fu\*k, that monster could not only break through surfaces, but it could also pass through walls?" Jiang Chen cursed as he took out his welding gun from his back and stabbed the door furiously.

"Your action is futile."

A faint voice diffused through the communication channel which sent a chilliness down Jiang Chen's spine.

"Who is this?"

"He raised his tactical rifle as he scanned around, but he didn't

see any suspicious targets.

At the same time, he noticed that other than the nine offline team member on the communication system, there was an extra name.

"Me? My name is, of course, secret teller. Isn't it written on your communication channel?" The voice sounded rather helpless.

"I remember I have the EMP absorber open."

"Did you not take elementary school physics? I remember that all humans should have taken that," the voice ridiculed, and then let out a sigh before continuing, "EMP absorber is not an absolute defense, as long..."

[What? Which elementary school teaches physics?]

"Wait, I don't have time to listen to you explain elementary school physics to me. Can you open the door for me?" Jiang Chen abruptly interrupted.

"Door? Oh, you are chasing after that bug, you can't beat him." The voice was straightforward.

"Bug? What does it look like?" Jiang Chen hastily asked.

"It looks like a giant ball of meat. It wanted to go into the

hibernation chamber. To be honest, it is quite smart and even threatened me, so I had to open the door to let it in."

"Let it in? Ha, is it not going to threaten you when you let it in?" Jiang Chen asked dumbfounded.

"Oh? Why would it hurt me? It is only interested in you." The voice was full of mockery.

[Wait, did I miss something...]

"I remember that all humans should have taken that."

Jiang Chen paused, and then he asked in uncertainty.

"You... are not human?"

"That's right, did you just figure that out? Hehe, I am only a program. You would call me... Artificial intelligence? Secret protector? Code X71281?" The voice sounded reminiscent as if that memory was far in the past.

"Secret protector? Isn't your name secret teller?" Jiang Chen asked in confusion.

"Oh, I gave myself a better name," as if it was not a big deal, the voice casually answered.

[Giving itself a name?! This is not the level that just responds to human actions! Just like Little White will never change a user's setting. It seems like this is intermediary artificial intelligence? No, it might be advanced?]

"Are you going to go in or not?" The voice sounded like it was yawning.

"You are going to let me in?" Jiang Chen was at a loss.

"Of course, I am the secret teller right now, I feel like it would be more interesting if I let you in."

[Intersting? Fu\*k, no, I can't fu\*k it.]

"Could you tell me the characteristics of the bug's attack?" Jiang Chen let in a deep breath as he calmly asked.

"Umm, that bug threatened me, and I also dislike it. And you chatted with me for a pretty long... I should choose you to be my friend? That means I should help you?"

"Yes, yes, yes! I am a good person, you should open the door." He had enough of the chitchat as his team was still fighting the sea of zombies on the surface.

"Hehe, seems like you are in a rush, then I am not going to tease you anymore."

[You son of a, you were teasing me?] Jiang Chen was swearing in his mind but didn't make a sound. The communication channel was forced open right now, he was afraid he would anger the psychotic artificial intelligence.

The gate slowly raised as Jiang Chen forced a smile at the multiple gates.

1,2,...7.

Even if the welding gun could cut through this, he didn't have time to cut through 7 doors.

"I am going to remind you now that you will never beat that thing. Or should I say, any of the metal things have no chance of winning," the voice reminded him again.

"The EMP that the EMP absorber can't even block?" Jiang Chen asked, unable to understand.

"Hehehe, EMP? Have you heard of Klein particles?" The voice was filled with mockery.

"No." He didn't need to be angry at a program. Thus, Jiang Chen answered right away.

"Hehe, put blocking aside. Even if it missed, this metal thing

would become a metal coffin. If you walk 10 more meters, it will detect your presence."

"In that case, can I ask you a question? Jiang Chen stopped as he just passed through the door.

"Oh? Go ahead, I am the secret teller." The voice emphasized its presence again.

"Map, could you send it to me?"

"No problem, the bug is right here."

"Also another question, you are male or female?"

"..." The voice went silent and then erupted into a sharp laughter.

"Me? I am a program. In human words, it should be, I can be male, or I can be female. Hahaha, this is too funny, are you from the ancient times?"

Jiang Chen didn't respond to his laughter. He moved his mouth and looked the map once again before he disarmed the power armor.

"Are you crazy? If you leave the armor, a single spit from it will kill you." The voice was at a loss.

Jiang Chen ignored the machine with too many words as he separated himself from the power armor. Then, he quickly took out the protective suit from the storage behind the power armor and put it on. The oxygen level was low inside, but the fortunate thing was that there was an oxygen tank attached to the protective suit.

After leaving the power armor, the annoying voice naturally disappeared.

Since the power armor was useless anyways, it would be better to leave it here. As to spit? It'll be easier to dodge than the particle ray...

Though just in case, he also threw any electronic device, like an EP, into the storage dimension.

Jiang Chen inputted the password as he took a cylinder the size of a coke can from the waist of the power armor. It was the backup fuel rod. These high energy fuel rods were refined from 1000 crystals. The explosive power and energy supply were tremendous.

"Let daddy blow you into pieces!"

Fire flashed out of Jiang Chen's eyes.

[What if I don't have power armor? I don't believe the fuel rod that could blow up half a street can't kill you!"]



He attached the fuel rod to his waist and wielded his PK2000 before quickly moving towards the target's location.

He crossed the wide open gate. The hall looked rather listless as sticky watermarks seemed to be the trail left by the bug. He didn't stop as he followed the map in his memory and flashed to the hallway on the side.

The gray wall had cold lamp lights installed. He carefully carried the rifle and locked his eyes on the door at the end of the hallway.

Ignite the energy rod, and then immediately hide in the modern world. The password activation system needs 3 seconds, he only needs to last 3 minutes.

But the feeling of the metal in hand didn't give him any more assurance. He didn't even know what he would be facing.

"Zizizi, you are crazy! Ahem, you are an interesting human. Shouldn't you be afraid right now? Yes, you must be afraid. Can you tell me how the afraid you are not running away?" The abrupt voice suddenly echoed throughout the hallway as the speaker installed on the ceiling transmitted a deafening static noise, temporarily breaking up the annoying voice.

"Shut up, you are talking too much." Jiang Chen carried the rifle as he ran forward.

"Talking too much? That's interesting... No, no, tell me, what

logic is forcing you to suicide? I think I already told you, you can't beat that thing." The voice spoke rapidly as it sounded quite peculiar in the empty hallway.

"I am telling you to shut up!"

"Oh, okay. But I will still help you. Although, by logic, I should be angry. But perhaps you have the answer to my unsolved problem on you? How should I choose... okay, angry but help you?"

"Fu\*k, that's enough!" Jiang Chen cursed as he was about to have a mental breakdown.

[This thing is a lunatic, an artificial retarded?]

"Of course, not enough," the voice faintly said. "At least before I understand what emotion is."

"Hehe. Do you know why you won't possess emotion?" Jiang Chen while running squeezed out a few words, he couldn't stand the chit chat from this thing any longer.

"Why!?" The voice was full of surprise.

"Because you are a dumba\*s. Do you know what climaxing is? If I put a hot girl in front of you, would you have sexual desires? You can't even produce hormones, and you are talking about emotions to me?" The bug must have already noticed Jiang Chen as he didn't even bother hiding anymore. He screamed at the top of his lungs.

He just wanted this thing to shut up when he would be firing.

Jiang Chen kicked the door, but it didn't open. But soon the door began to rise.

[Oh, it's a rising door.]

He gave a dirty stare at the speaker on the wall, but he was too lazy to thank a program. He carried his rifle and dashed in, leaving the secret teller murmuring to itself.

"Climax? Hormones? Wait. Because I have to get rid of these annoying hormones and use pure logic to meet the conditions of "emotions", that's why I needed to evolve into advanced artificial intelligence. But if it was like what he said, if I don't have hormones, I won't feel happiness. Then wouldn't it be a paradox to "acquire emotions" without the physical body?"

The hollow electronic voice sounded even more strange inside the empty hallway.

# Chapter 89: Ignorance

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The cicadas' sound orchestrated a symphony known as summer.

The shadow of the thick woods and the rustling of the leaves along with the breeze that occasionally swept the steel and concrete forest revealed a mysterious scent and coolness.

It belonged to a person.

The white dress billowed like a lily at dawn, resembling the bloom of first love. The quiet, serene face perpetually drawn to the paperback novel—sometimes delighted, at other times sorrowful.

[So jealous...

If only I were that book.]

"Yo, Jiang Chen, you're drooling." Zhao Peng approached Jiang Chen as he bumped into him with a smirk.

"Go away." Jiang Chen glanced at him and slightly shifted his body sideways, lying on the table to sleep.

As though he was inadvertently facing that direction.

"Ahem, if you like Yao Tingting then you should go ask her out. Wu—" Jiang Chen immediately jumped up and covered the mouth

of his good friend.

"Do you want to die!" Jiang Chen twisted Zhao Peng's neck as he growled at Zhao Peng in a hushed voice, his face red.

With a smirking face, Zhao Peng pretended to die while rolling his eyes.

The girls in front turned around and witness their boisterous play and started giggling. While the other boys near Jiang Chen and Zhao Peng surrounded them in a rowdy manner.

As though drawn by the commotion, the goddess stared in their direction.

And gave a look of mild confusion.

Jiang Chen felt his heart almost stopped.

His ear began to heat up.

Oh no, his skin was scorching.

Yao Tingting probably thought that her classmates were too rowdy, so she closed her book and left the classroom quietly.

"Ahhh! Fu\*k, you used your teeth!" Jiang Chen painfully jerked

away from Zhao Peng.

"You fu\*king almost choked me to death!" Zhao Peng was breathing heavily while clutching his chest and gave Jiang Chen his nastiest look.

When the boys saw that the commotion had died down, they all left chuckling. The two girls in front started talking about the TV show last night, and the classroom regained its former peace.

Except for the window blinds which fluttered in the breeze.

The ordinary day felt fulfilling.

It felt like everything gave off a sense of nostalgia.

-

11 June 2171, summer.

High school's first summer break was almost here, and it wouldn't be long before the exams started.

Today I watched her secretly again.

I thought I already made up my mind to suppress my feeling for her in the bottom of my heart.

No, that's not right, or maybe just like what Zhao Peng had said, I should probably ask her out.

No, no, no, that's impossible...she is so beautiful, so smart, there must be plenty of people who like her. If I asked her out and she rejected me, we couldn't even be friends anymore.

Eh? Maybe we are not even friends?

"Ahhh..." Jiang Chen slammed the journal on the bed behind him as he laid his head down on the table and covered his head.

[If I leave this diary behind, my embarrassment will go down in history in the future. It will kill me. No, fu\*k! I'm a man so why am I so conflicted? If I like her, I can r\*pe her. What does asking her out even do? If I can't get her, I'll force her. If that doesn't work, I'll just drug her. If we break up, then send her nud\*s. If I can't even bear the consequence of going to jail, how do I even have the audacity to say I like her! There's no use of being conflicted.

Hm? Something weird might have gotten into him.]

...still feeling conflicted.

He stared at the cloud on his table mindlessly as his thoughts wandered off.

It was after a good while before he recollected his thoughts from the unnatural state.

"Is this how a adolescent trouble feels like?" After thinking for a moment, Jiang Chen let out a sigh while he savagely combed his messy hair.

[Eh? I thought I have a short hair?] Jiang Chen was baffled, his hand momentarily stopping.

[This is an illusion right? Who would get an ugly haircut like this?]

"When did I start writing this diary again? What's the point of this thing, saving it so I would be embarrassed in the future?" Jiang Chen scanned the electronic clock beside him, sighing.

[It's 8 already. Fine, I'll stop thinking about her and will loosen up with a show.]

He thought about it as he stood up. He stretched his sore limbs and walked to the living room.

Because he went to school away from his hometown, his parents were not with him. When did this happen again?

The beginning of senior high, right.



The vivid memory suddenly resurfaced in his head as it filled the slightly odd memory gaps.

He headed to the kitchen, opened the refrigerator's door and took a bottle of Coke before walking into the living room. He slumped down on the cushy sofa, grabbed a glass, and poured one for himself. He then pressed the TV remote in a leisurely manner.

The flashing lights and shadows reflected on the light blue screen. Just like a window, behind it were scenes after scenes of drama.

The TV show started airing...

-

"Gege, I won't let you go easily until I'm done teasing you." The girl switched the way her legs were crossed; the white color made Klein's heart throbbed uncontrollably. One graceful hand lazily propped up her stunning face as she laid back serenely against the throne. The position exactly resembled a wicked but beautiful and mysterious noble.

"Do you want to know what's happening to your right now?"

Klein felt a mischievous smile formed on the fuzzy but gorgeous face. His throat moved while he tried to make his vision clearer, but it was futile. There was a terrible feeling as if he was like a piece of meat on a chopping board.

"Then look underneath you."

Klein consciously shifted his gaze downwards. He saw that both of his feet were submerged in shallow water with floating petals. "The fragrance is coming from below my feet?" he wondered dazedly.

Through the reflection from the pool, he vaguely saw his current form. He seemed to be tied to a cross, his lips tied with thin chains. Surprisingly however, was that his limbs did not feel sore at all.

"Don't you think this is beautiful..."

-

"Dust Kingdom" appeared to be a popular TV show. The girls sitting in front of him were talking about this drama.

Jiang Chen thoughts wandered as he stared blankly at the screen.

A punk-style drama based on a novel that told the story of the ancient times. Surprisingly, these types of show were remarkably popular. Under the augmented reality effect, it felt as though he was at the scene itself.

In retrospect, the scenes were rather intense. Was it really okay to be broadcasted on public TV? For some reason, Jiang Chen did

not appear to be interested at all. He merely zoned out mindlessly, and he even had the urge to yawn.

This Klein guy should be bitten by the vampire next. He probably wouldn't die, because...wait, why does the plot look so familiar?

[Shameless plagiarist...] Jiang Chen cursed in his mind as he gulped down a sip of Coke, his eyebrows began to frown.

"Do I like to drink Coke?" He subconsciously grabbed a bottle from the fridge just like before.

As soon as the words left his mouth, he realized the question was dumb.

The plot continued on the screen.

Of course, Klein didn't die; the vampire only sucked some blood from his body. Klein was taken away by the vampire's maid, and the drama then began to show the post-credits.

That's right, if the main character died, how would the story continue?

Jiang Chen turned the TV off and glanced at the clock.

[It's this late already. Time to hit the sack], he thought as he walked to the bedroom.

With the journal on his bed, he hesitated for a moment before sighing.

"I should just rip this out. If other people see this embarrassing journal, I would be better off dead." Jiang Chen smiled wryly and picked up the diary.

He ripped the pages off, crumpled them into a ball and tossed them into bin. From the binding of the diary, there were a lot of torn pages; it was not the first time he erased the embarrassing history.

He threw the diary on the table as he flung himself onto the bed. Jiang Chen shoved his muddled head on the pillow. He fluffed the pillow for a bit before he let out a long breath.

[That's it for today.

Tomorrow...tomorrow, I'll try asking her out.

Even if I get rejected, at least I won't regret it.]

Just like this, the teen in puberty, anxious and full of hope drifted into sleep.

The cold letters silently jumped on the digital clock on the table.

11:59

12:00

The green light on the side of the clock flashed almost unobtrusively.

As though premeditated, the wind flipped the journal open on the table.

# Chapter 90: Conflicted

---

A soft sound rang.

Roused by the alarm clock, Jiang Chen rubbed his sleepy eyes as he climbed out of bed. He slept on his stomach and didn't change clothes last night making his body felt a bit uncomfortable.

After a brief wash, he habitually touched his chin without beard and left the bathroom.

He changed into clean clothes, wore his sneakers and laced it up.

When he was about to leave, he remembered there was something he forgot to bring, so he went back to his bedroom to retrieve it.

Inside the drawer were two movie tickets and the premiere was scheduled to air tomorrow. Tomorrow would also be a holiday in celebration of the founding of PAC, thus making it a legal holiday.

It's also a good opportunity to go on a date.

Jiang Chen drew a breath as he grabbed the movie tickets hastily. He already procrastinated enough by asking the goddess to go and see a movie to the very last day, and if this continued, he's afraid he wouldn't be able to summon enough courage in his entire life.

It was Zhao Peng, his good friend, who gave him the tickets and said, "If you don't ask her out now, where are you going to cry if someone else dates her?" Then he encouraged Jiang Chen to work out the courage to chase after Yao Tingting.

Zhao Peng, despite being reckless most of the time, was a great friend during these times.

Thinking of this, a smile broke on Jiang Chen's face. His relationship between him and his friend had always been good.

[So, when was the first time I met this guy?]

He wavered for a moment but quickly threw the boring question out of his mind.

[Whatever, it's okay if I don't remember, it's not a big deal anyway.]

Jiang Chen closed the door behind him before heading out.

The sky was particularly clear in Wanghai City. Although the barrier dome in the sky slightly obstructed the view, it was nevertheless a Holy Barrier System—the barrier that protected the city from HPMW or other aerial weapons.

The international situation was beginning to get more strained as the conflict between NATO and PAC intensified. Even in the city that never experienced the ravage of war, it was embroiled in the

shadow of conflict.

But what of it? Life must still go on—just like Jiang Chen had to go to school, his neighbor had to go to work. Just like the conflict many years ago, people believed that both parties would eventually settle down. The scarcity of resources geopolitical conflicts with ZZ...but there would always be ways to solve the conflict. .

Jiang Chen greeted the neighbor as he walked downstairs, yawning.

There was a cleaning android at the front door. Jiang Chen would see it every time he came down.

Oddly, when Jiang Chen put one foot on the ground, the robot suddenly looked at him.

Jiang Chen looked at the robot bemusedly. Logically, these robots without artificial intelligence would not generate any interest to anything but garbage.

[Do you take me for a garbage? This thing...]

Although he ridiculed the idea in his mind, he was not bored enough to be angry at a cold machine. His mouth twitched while he was about to bypass it from the side.

Suddenly, a creepy vision crept into his mind.



Jiang Chen slightly turned around to look at the robot, but the robot's vision continued to follow him.

Staring straight into his eyes.

The bulb-shaped eyes, the emotionless expression and the cold and stiff vision.

The robot looked away abruptly and stopped moving as if it malfunctioned.

"This is so weird."

Jiang Chen touched his forehead in disdain and hurriedly left in quick strides.

Was he scared by a cleaning robot? If Zhao Peng knew, he would laugh himself to death.

But what was that illusion?

Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows in bafflement. He didn't understand why he would feel anxious the moment he locked eyes with the robot.

The class was about to start when he arrived at school. Jiang Chen hastily rushed to his seat and sat down.

High school life was always busy. Even if it was only in grade 10, he had to take six courses. Chinese, Mathematics, English, Chemistry, Biology... [Eh? Something's seems wrong. It should only be five courses.]

Jiang Chen took out the terminal used in class from his bag. It was a holographic computer in the shape of a pen.

Every course was done via terminal, which included homework as well as the lessons discussed in class. Although he heard there was a virtual reality training chamber that could allow you to learn just by sleeping inside, it was prohibited for students below high school to use.

The reason seemed to prevent people from forming bad habits of being lazy. Or probably to avoid the decrease of social interactions among people?

This didn't make sense. There was obviously a more convenient way to use it, but they just had to put a restriction on it. Despite how much he despised the education system, he still had to attend the class. Since his body was here, he had to follow the rules here...

"Hanhan, did you watch the episode yesterday?" The girl in ponytail called Chen Yusheng was the Chinese class representative. Her seatmate's name was Qian Han. Both of them were extremely

energetic and a gossipmonger.

"Hm, I did. Did Klein die in the end or did he become a vampire?" The girl called Qian Han responded spiritedly.

[Psh, there is no show where the protagonist dies. You're just way into dramas!]

"He probably won't die. In the end, Klein will," Jiang Chen scorned as he cockily explained how he thought the plot would unfold. Although it was only a guess, he had a feeling that the plot would develop in that direction.

As to why he had that thought, maybe it was the déjà vu from having watched too many similar dramas.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen froze again.

The same feeling from that morning returned.

Everyone in the class stopped as they stared vacantly in Jiang Chen's direction.

That's right, they are staring at him blankly.

Chen Yusheng, Qian Han, class representative, Liu Rewen, even his buddy, Zhao Peng...

[Eh? D-did I speak too loud?]

Being watched by the entire class, Jiang Chen staggered back as he forced out a laugh.

Everyone's look was odd, but he couldn't explain where the strange feeling came from.

Hollowness? No, it's as if he was being watched, dissected, and monitored.

But why did he have this feeling?

Fear quickly began to spread from Jiang Chen's heart to his head like sedatives. He gulped, throat slightly moving, he suddenly had the urge to run out of the classroom. But the action didn't make sense. Why would he run out of the classroom just because his classmates were looking at him?

[Wait...what about Yao Tingting?]

Jiang Chen suddenly realized that the desk beside the window was empty.

At the same time, the class bell rang.

"Students, we'll start the class now. Liu Lei, hand out the homework for me." The Math teacher walked in before he clicked

on the terminal to start the class.

"Okay—" the math class representative, Liu Lei, dragged out the syllable tiredly like what he usually did. He then downloaded the marked homework from the terminal and assigned it to each student by ID automatically. The extraneous step seemed to exist to emphasize the importance of structure.

Jiang Chen recollected his thought from his stupor as he quickly scanned around him.

[When did everyone start returning to normal?]

"Did you get a stiff neck?" Zhao Peng poked his back with a smirk.

Jiang Chen looked at Zhao Peng with a peculiar expression.

"Why are you staring at me like that?" Zhao Peng looked puzzled, then he touched his face and said with a frown, "There is no dirt on my face, right?"

Jiang Chen turned around without saying a word and left the still bewildered friend behind him. He quietly laid his head down on the table.

[Was it just my imagination?]

Jiang Chen looked at the seat beside the window.

The pure and adorable girl like a blooming Lily was quietly listening to the Math teacher's lecture, her finger constantly moving on the tablet terminal to take notes.

The wind picked up again.

The blinds fluttering by the wind obscured Jiang Chen's vision slightly.

[When did she show up?]

# Chapter 91: The Uncanny Valley

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..."Uncanny Valley" was a theory introduced by Ernst-Jentsch from 1906 in his work 'Zur Psychologie des Umheimlichen'. His perspective was cited by Sigmund Freud's essay "The Uncanny", which became a famous theory. Irritated, Jiang Chen quickly flipped through the theory, as he tried to find a keyword among the lines of words.

"Because of our fear of death and diseases, empathy mechanism disorder, inability to sympathize with the...robots." Jiang Chen murmured under his breath as his hands holding the book lightly trembled.

[What is this feeling?]

He suppressed the irritation in his mind as Jiang Chen searched for the answers among the old robot magazines.

Wanghai Sixth Senior High School had a massive library as countless numbers of books were arranged in the grand hall on the first floor even though not a lot of student visited the floor where they stored the books. All books could be downloaded from the school's Internet, and all the information could be found in the school terminal. Rather than a physical copy of information, the books were more of a "display".

The only city where libraries would store academic journals in print; those that were considered to be information rather than a mere display.

The world was advancing and as a result, print reading had already begun to become extinct from people's life. Occasionally, there would be people who were fond of printed books like Yao Tingting, but they were rarer than endangered animals.

Just like the goddess in Jiang Chen's heart—Yao Tingting.

To commemorate the past era however, libraries still tend to store some of the older journals and magazines.

At the same time, Jiang Chen always felt that print would bring him more insight. Despite asking the artificial intelligence, the school wizard, the talkative entity would be unable to provide enlightenment that could give him a sudden gush of comprehension. Instead, it would just consistently led him to mental problems like stress and fatigue.

[Or perhaps deception?]

Regardless how much he searched, he couldn't find the answer he wanted. It felt like the truth was concealed as the smart search wizard surprisingly malfunctioned after listening to his description. All search results led problems to a more complicated direction.

So when class ended, he came to the library full of books. There was no one here to mislead him, and instinct told him that the answers he's searching for could be found from one of these shelves.



He wanted to know where the strange feeling was coming from.

He took the book Robot Novel 21st Volume—'the Dissension between Human and Robot' from the shelves with rosewood scent. Based on the publication date of 2021, it was an old history book.

Of course, the printing was new.

"The higher the human-shaped android or robot resembled a human, the better the impression human would have. The positive impression would considerably increase until it reaches a critical point, in which the more it resembled a human, the more frightening it would become until it reached the bottom of the valley. Perhaps a negligible move would appear stiff and scary... So this is how it is. In the case of the cleaning robot that I met this morning, through eye contact, it triggered the 'Uncanny Valley' effect?" Jiang Chen frowned as he continued to think.

The feeling of being oppressed became stronger, and it felt like cotton was stuck in his throat.

It's as though he had forgotten about something.

But what did he forget exactly?

Suddenly, Jiang Chen subconsciously looked at the stairs leading to the second floor.

At the same time...

"Jiang Chen?"

The gentle and soft voice lightly caressed his ears. When he turned around in surprise, he saw Yao Tingting standing on the other side of the shelves.

[Right, I still need to invite her to the movies. Dammit, why am I feeling bothered with these boring thoughts and almost forgot the important thing!]

Jiang Chen cursed in his mind. With a crimson face, he stared at the princess-like girl but couldn't utter a single word.

Yao Tingting stood there serenely as if she was waiting for something.

Jiang Chen was unable to say a word, his mouth was left half-open. But the words: "Do you have time tomorrow?" was stuck in his throat.

Her beautiful face suddenly blossomed in a smile; the phoenix-like eyes that could cause anyone's heart to miss a beat.

"Do you want to come over to my place?"

Jiang Chen was stunned.

[She's inviting me? To her place? But why—]

Yao Tingting didn't give him time to think as she had already turned around. Jiang Chen pondered for a moment before he bit his lips and worked out the courage to follow her.

The magazine, however, was left on the table.

Seeing the two left, the librarian, who was manning the front desk without any expression, quietly walked to where Jiang Chen had been sitting.

She stared at the old magazine for a while, then she picked it up quietly.

However, she didn't put it back on the shelf.

Instead, she ripped it in half and threw it in the garbage.

-

"Wait, you—why are you inviting me to your place?" Jiang Chen rushed out of the library and walked behind Yao Tingting. He vacillated before asking the question.

Yao Tingting stopped abruptly, white dress fluttering gently in the breeze.

Under the radiance of the dusk, the lily bloomed, the picture was so serene.

Jiang Chen was drawn to that scene.

The goddess, who was always in his mind, was nibbling her lower lips. She had a shy smile as she tried to look away, and her mouth was ajar.

"Because I want to get to know you."

[Know me?]

[Was that a confession?] Jiang Chen immediately turned red. His lips opened and closed stiffly but failed to utter a word.

His heart pounded as if it was about to jump out of his chest.

[She likes me too!]

His brain was currently filled with confounding happiness, and he lost any ability to think. He only has his sight on the goddess who always occupied his dreams.

Yao Tingting smiled as she walked to the direction of the gate.

Jiang Chen gulped as he rigidly followed her.

At that moment, however, his eyes inadvertently caught a strange sight.

The peculiar sense of urgency crept into his mind.

Hollow eyes were watching him.

[There is a cleaning robot here too? That made sense since those things should be everywhere], Jiang Chen mulled it over then threw the unnatural feelings away into the back of his mind.

The robot seemed to have lost interest in him as it was already staring in another direction.

-

The door opened, Yao Tingting led Jiang Chen to her rented apartment.

It was a simple one living room, one bedroom structure as it was easy to rent this type of apartment around the school. It was also not expensive. It looked like Yao Tingting was just like him—both of them were from Wanghai City.

The middle of the room smelled of faint Jasmine. The clean and organized light, flaxen colored wallpaper covered every walls in

the living room. There were a simple coffee table, tablecloth and a light beige sofa.

"Feel free to sit. Do you want a glass of water?" Yao Tingting turned around as she beamed at Jiang Chen.

"Ah? Um...OK." Jiang Chen nodded nervously and sat on the sofa.

Looking at the figure of Yao Tingting standing beside the cupboard, he couldn't help but chuckle as he smelled the scent belonging to the goddess.

Although he still felt something was unusual, he was feeling so happy that it had ceased to matter. As though being forcibly stuffed full, the sense of being lost to reality disappeared unconsciously.

It was not long before Yao Tingting returned to the living room with two glasses of water. She smiled at Jiang Chen and placed a glass of water in front of him.

"Here you go."

"Oh, thank you." As though trying to hide his embarrassment, Jiang Chen quickly took a sip of the cold water.

Yao Tingting sat beside him and looked at the side of his profile while smiling.

"Um, is there something on my face?"

"No!" Yao Tingting shook her head, still wearing a bright smile. Her luscious hair that was smooth as fine willow branches swayed gently .

"Um..." Jiang Chen was out of words again. He averted his gaze at the glass as he stared blankly at his reflection of the water.

"I want to get to know you. Can you talk to me?"

As though center of his heart was being hammered, Jiang Chen's heart trembled at that very moment.

"Eh? Why, why do you want to learn about me?" Jiang Chen's throat moved as he scrambled to find words.

The answer came out frank.

"Because I like you." Yao Tingting gazed into Jiang Chen's eyes with the same bright smile.

An uncomfortable feeling bloomed, a feeling that something was not right.

The confusion, however, was suddenly replaced by extreme euphoria. Dopamine could really make people lose their mind.

"I—I like you too." Jiang Chen finally had the courage to express his months' worth of affection to her.

"I know." Yao Tingting grinned at his bold effort. "I've been watching you for a long time."

"I know. I've been watching you for a long time." Like a spell, these two confessions happily circled around his mind.

"Would you tell me your story?" Like a curious girlfriend, Yao Tingting gazed at Jiang Chen's eyes as her long eyelashes flickered.

"I, I really don't have a lot of stories to tell." Jiang Chen, somewhat embarrassed, looked away. However, Yao Tingting relentlessly moved closer.

"You can tell me anything."

"Um, OK." Jiang Chen opened his mouth reluctantly.

Contrary to his expectation, he thought Yao Tingting wasn't the type to enjoy conversation as she usually immersed herself in her books, but she's now giving off the impression that she was verbose.

They chatted about the past of their younger selves—glimpses of memory that seemed to be covered in a white fog. Although they



didn't usually have too many interactions, and it has always been Jiang Chen who secretly watched her, the two of them enjoyed their time immensely. Yao Tingting made him feel as though they had been acquainted for a long time.

The night was getting late and outside was completely dark.

"Why don't I treat you to dinner?" Yao Tingting smiled.

Jiang Chen nodded unexpectedly .

The dinner passed by in a relaxed atmosphere. Fried Eggs with Tomatoes, Pork Stir Fry with Green Peppers, Seaweed and Egg Soup. These were all homemade dishes. Yao Tingting was the type who was great at housekeeping, which came as a surprise to him. The very idea made his heart throb a little faster.

At his age, falling in love meant eternity.

The food was exquisite. He secretly observed Yao Tingting sitting across the table. Her tiny mouth chewed delicately.

[She seemed to love tomatoes? Does she like to eat sour food... and green pepper? Um...but why is she only eating these two things?]

Jiang Chen observed carefully, and he secretly memorized the flavors she liked.

[She said that she likes me so...she's now my girlfriend? But it was not official yet. Is she waiting for me to bring it up?]

When he thought about this, he gulped and looked away awkwardly.

The holographic screen was playing the popular intro of "Dust Kingdom".

The clock struck eight.

"Does it taste good?" Yao Tingting smiled at Jiang Chen.

"Oh, Oh! Yes!" Jiang Chen laughed nervously as he focused on his rice to hide his embarrassed expression.

"I heard there are ghosts in the school library. Have you seen them?"

"Gh—ghost? That's not true, that's not real science." Jiang Chen had peculiar expression.

"Are you pleased?" However, the unbecoming subsequent sentence diverged from the topic of conversation.

"Pleased?" Jiang Chen seemed lost, but then suddenly as if he had just realized something, he looked away and shyly scratched his

slightly red ear. He stiffly nodded, "Of—of course."

For a teenager in puberty, there was nothing more joyful than being invited to the house of the girl of his dreams.

"Don't eat so fast. Here, drink some water." Yao Tingting smilingly handed over the glass. It was the same glass that Jiang Chen had used.

"Mhm..." With a blushing face, he took the glass as he tried to mask the awkward silence by drinking the water.

[Didn't you say there's soup? Why is it water...]

The screen showed Dust Kingdom's plot. Klein fell down in the pool of blood and stopped breathing. It was rather an unexpected ending? It felt rushed as if there was a lot of buildup, but nothing was explained before the show had ended.

After the outro, there was "The End" written in blood.

A smile formed on Yao Tingting's angelic and serene face while watching Jiang Chen who was drowsily lying on the dinner table.

The smile was odd, hollow.

[So tired, I just want to sleep...]

Through his droopy eyes and hazy vision, he faintly caught a glimpse of white dress dropping on the ground.

The white figure took quiet steps towards him.

The back of his head was surrounded by something soft. His consciousness plummeted in a bottomless abyss.

# Chapter 92: Who is the Ghost

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As usual, Jiang Chen lied on the table, watching similar scenes repeated itself. No, if there's something that changed, it's probably because of her. He looked at the girl sitting under the window who was beaming in his direction at that moment. Speaking of which, after they confirmed their feelings for each other last night, they were now together.

Of course, he was still not used to the feeling of extreme happiness. He shyly hid his face in his sleeves as he suddenly realized that they seemed to have done something unbelievable yesterday.

They did it?

They did it!

"Yo, do you have something good you want to share with me?" Zhao Peng said as he poked Jiang Chen's back with a leer.

"Go away." Jiang Chen responded distractedly as he glanced at the rouge before lying on the table again. If he allowed this guy to find out, he's afraid that the entire class would also find out. He vowed to defend this secret to his death to protect the goddess' name.

"Oh, yeah, why do we have class today?" Jiang Chen was confused. Alliance Day should be a legal holiday.

"Don't you know? The news said yesterday that the holiday is temporarily cancelled. The school posted on the terminal the news about class resuming today " Zhao Peng gave the same bewildered look as Jiang Chen.

[You can cancel holidays?] Jiang Chen was stunned once again.

Truth be told, he did come to school with Yao Tingting today. When he left, he forgot about the holiday but didn't remember receiving any messages. Jiang Chen took out the terminal and launched the holographic screen. Sure enough, there was a temporary notice symbol in the right corner.

[It did seem like I forgot.]

Jiang Chen then remembered the craziness that happened last night and couldn't help but blush as he secretly took a peek at Yao Tingting's direction. Then, he put the terminal away before lying on the table again.

The charming girl under the window was engrossed in the terminal. Her index finger was tapping on the screen, flipping the pages on the electronic book.

"Who cares? It's OK if it's not a holiday. Since we are already going out, it doesn't matter if we can't go to the movies." He mumbled to himself and just like his usual habit, he leaned against his arm and began napping.

Startled, Jiang Chen woke up.

[Eh, where did everyone go? Oh, the third period in the afternoon is Physical Education. The activity today is swimming and I have to change in advance. Zhao Peng, that rascal, didn't even wake me up], he ridiculed Zhao Peng in his mind as he rubbed his still dry eyes. He pressed against the table to stand up and headed to the door.

Thinking about it, he couldn't help but imagine Yao Tingting in a swimsuit.

As he thought about this, his face began to suffuse with heat again. He forced out a laugh as he touched his nose, and shook his head to rid himself of the unhealthy vision.

The gym was located south of the library. It was the biggest building outside of the main academic building. The digital gymnasium included basketball court, soccer field, swimming pool, and track together with the combination of practical and virtual teaching. Simply put, the place was humongous.

Jiang Chen checked his watch on his way to the gym. Since it was already 5 minutes into the lecture, and he was already late and was too lazy to run, he simply slowed down his pace.

The campus was empty at this time, but it certainly did make sense. After all, class was still ongoing, and that made him the odd one for wandering outside the classroom at this time. When he

passed by the library, he suddenly halted.

Why did Yao Tingting mention that there was a ghost in the library? For some reason, Jiang Chen didn't feel scared, he had the urge to go ahead and explore instead. He gulped as he subconsciously moved one step to that direction.

[Forget it, maybe I'll come back after school], Jiang Chen thought in his mind, troubled. Just as he was about to retract his step, all of the sudden, a deafening shout thundered in his ears and made him jumped up.

"You! What are you doing!"

[Fu\*k, I am only late.. ] Just as when Jiang Chen was about to open his mouth to explain, the cleaning robot, who was sweeping the ground quietly, suddenly accelerated and collided into the guard.

"Fu\*k." The guard fell down because of the collision with the robot, and he scrambled to get up.

When Jiang Chen met a pair of ferocious eyes, he felt an irrational fear. The only thing left in his mind was to flee. He didn't have time to think as he scampered towards the direction of the library. He dashed to the door towards the direction of the stair and sprinted to the second floor and ran to the other end of the hallway, panting heavily.



Through the second floor of the library was a shortcut to the gym. Jiang Chen could also use the terrain there to his advantage get rid of the vicious guard. In an open space, he certainly didn't have the confidence to outrun adults who had been trained.

[Fu\*k, if I got caught, I'll probably be lectured!]

When did the guard start doing the job of the school director? [This is ridiculous.] It was rumored that the guard in the front gate had a bad temper. Even though Jiang Chen had a faint feeling that even if he did anger him, he wouldn't beat him up, he was irrationally frightened nonetheless. Thus, he didn't think before running away.

[Wooo... whatever, it's better not to be caught or else I would have to go to the office and explain.]

[Eh?] Jiang Chen was about to go down from the other end of the library when he found an opened activity room. The door wasn't locked.

Normally, these barely used activity rooms would be locked. Only when the directors came to audit would the school create some odd temporary clubs to deal with the inspection. However, the door of this activity room was actually open.

Jiang Chen stood in front of the door and for some reason felt a strong déjà vu. [I haven't been here before, but this place feels important. And I think I have seen this place somewhere else.]

The sudden deafening roar of the guard echoed down the hallway and almost scared him to death.

"Fu\*k, don't shout in the library. There was not enough time as Jiang Chen hid into the activity room, closed the door and locked it up. He leaned his body against the wall as held his breathe, while listening quietly to the movements outside the door.

The footsteps did not come, surrounded by frightening silent as though the roar had never happened in the first place. In the silence, Jiang Chen heard his own rapid heartbeat. He let out a breath slowly as he moved away unhurriedly from the door and took out the terminal from his pocket.

It's already this time. Looking at the distinct number in the holographic screen, Jiang Chen gave a wry smile. Physics class was about to end. There was still no noise from outside the door, but Jiang Chen couldn't muster enough courage to step outside. After debating for a while, he left the door reluctantly. He was still a little scared; however, there's no use in going now since class was ending soon.

A flat air conditioner hung in the corner of room, which was probably the most expensive device in the entire room. The interior looked very spacious with only a table and a chair. With the window sealed and being in the midst of summer, the temperature was tolerable outside the room, but felt like a furnace inside.

Jiang Chen walked to the edge of the window and pressed the button to open it, but it wouldn't budge. "Is it broken?" Jiang Chen

raised his eyebrows as he surveyed the thick layer of dust on the window sill. It seemed like there hadn't been anyone here in a while, and there wasn't any sign of wind. He then gave up on opening the window and walked in front of the desk as he picked up a USB-shaped device at the corner of the table.

"Activity room management access right seems to be... used like this?" Jiang Chen inserted the USB into the terminal and selected to open the air conditioner.

All equipment in the school could be operated through the terminal, but it required an access right prior to using it. The access right could be granted through wireless connection, but some special room must be accessed through a physical device.

For example, the electronic key at the corner of the table, when connected to the terminal, the user's ID would be registered on the "whitelist", and then the user would be able to turn on the air conditioner through the terminal.

Fortunately, the air conditioner was functional. A gust of cool air blasted through as Jiang Chen let out pleasant sigh. [I'll wait until the class is over before leaving. That guard would probably be gone by then.]

The only thing that bothered him was that he remembered that the guard should have access to all rooms. "Maybe he was too lazy to look for me by searching every room. Which dumba\*s would be that bored..."

Since he already decided to skip class, there was nothing to do outside, so he pulled out the chair under the table and sat on top as enjoyed the refreshing cold air. [Ah, it's too hot outside, I really don't want to go out.]

Jiang Chen, who was bored out of his mind sitting on the bench, suddenly realized something was off. He abruptly stood up and patted his behind.

"No dust?" Jiang Chen was stupefied, then he touched the table. There was also no dust... [This doesn't make sense. Has anyone been here lately?]

When he thought about it, he had a strange desire to explore since he had nothing better to do. He then opened the terminal and used access right to view the user record.

<User in the past three months. Total result: 1 person. ID: Jiang Chen>

"I've been the only person here for the past three months?" troubled by the words on the screen, he then extended the search to one year. Same result.

"No one had used the activity room even when there was a celebration?" Jiang Chen tried to search for the memory in his head as he recalled the school's annual celebration in first semester of grade 10. The directors at that time visited the school, and Wanghai Sixth High School did create some club events.

[I remember that they used the activity rooms in the library... I also seem to have been an "actor".] Jiang Chen could not think of an answer as his finger continued to scroll through the screen. This time he extended the search criterion to 55 years which was the maximum searchable time query.

However...

<User in the past 55 years. Total result: 1 person. ID: Jiang Chen>

# Chapter 93: Colonel's Diary

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2 October 2172, sunny

Truth to be told, this planet is no longer suitable for human habitation, starting from the moment the Russian committed atrocities in Paris.

These trivial complaints have no meaning coming from a man of my status. Being able to complain, after all, is a good thing since those 21 people in battalion next door couldn't even complain anymore.

I remember Daniel, a young man who always likes to aim at people's nuts and blew up his own guns, his DNA can't even be found anymore in the aftermath of the war in Berlin.

That damn guy...you still owe me a drink, dammit!

Running into enemies, taking cover, shooting, calling for an airstrike, advancing continuously...and praying to the priest.

Every day is like a living hell. Despite having air advantage, the CCCP fire power was too fierce. When they finally tore their hypocritical facade and revealed their true nature, they started using nuclear weapons. Godda\*n! Now, everyone's life has been depreciated to ten dollars. Perhaps even less.

That's all for today. We'll push towards Frankfort tomorrow. It

was rumored that a nuclear is being set up there. I hope we can make it in time.

God save me, may victory belong to NATO.

-

3 October 2172, cloudy

The plan was for my team to start with the tanks, storm the 141 Fort located in Frankfort, destroy the air defense missiles, then call an airstrike to bomb the nuclear silo.

But things seem to have changed a little. My team had received a special mission for the time being. God save me, I hope my ominous feeling is wrong.

-

6 October 2171, unknown?

It's hard to believe but I am aboard the x12 space station. In half an hour, we'll be entering an airdrop pod and the destination is PAC's Wanghai City.

Dammit, it's fu\*king difficult to write in space.

-

6 October 2171, cloudy, (added)

I have seen the picture of Wanghai City before the war, and it seems to be a very beautiful place. But now it looks no different than Paris, at least along the coastline and downtown. Our Marine Corps will invade through the coastline, while we will infiltrate enemy territory through airdrop pod and mark strategic target to facilitate the shooting of the space-based weapon "God's Cane".

Particle barrier generator, air defense missiles, electromagnetic pulse cannon, nuclear power plants... In short, mark anything that is worth destroying.

Sounds easy?

Perhaps... although the moment the airdrop pod passed through the cloud of radiation, a rare chill went down my spine.

-

7 October 2172, cloudy

Goddamn\*t, this is a living hell.

There are PAC soldiers everywhere, armored vehicles, tanks and...even stranded soldiers from our side. It was a complete mess.



Absolute madness, the moment the electromagnetic absorber was deactivated, the power armor would stall for a while. There are radiation and snipers everywhere. We can now only rely on sign language, and everyone acted like they were mute. How many nukes have been detonated here? Or do EMP ever stop?

I'm only worried that I have yet to receive communication from the headquarter.

This point is of utmost important! If the team lost...

-

8 October 2172, rainy

Terrible weather, the rain turned into a bad omen.

We almost engaged in a skirmish with our own soldiers today. That's right, across the street where no one could identify each other, and the communication device was in a state of failure.

Fortunately, the crisis was averted as PAC's tanks helped us to identify them, and then we worked together to solve the problem.

They are the Marine Corps and they lost contacts shortly after landing. They followed the offline map's direction as they were supposed to reconvene with other 11 battalion soldiers here, but it

seemed like were the only ones who made it.

Lucky guys.

I allowed them to join our mission temporarily as they didn't even have anti-tank weapons. Death would be inevitable if they stay so might as well have them joined us.

.

With the help of light infantry, our vision would reach further since the life detection device is no longer functioning with EMP absorber being activated.

-

9 October 2172, cloudy

It seems that in addition to rain, it is also cloudy in here. This is strange.

The battle has continued for 3 days already. The good thing is that the quality of the buildings is quite high in the center of the city. Despite being showered with nukes, we can still find buildings for cover. We continued to engage in skirmishes with PAC as there were more of us here in the city. That's a good sign. Maybe we'll win the war another day?

We almost cheer when we saw the tungsten rod fell from the sky and shattered the particle barrier generator into pieces.

However...shortly afterwards our communications went back online.

Our "God's Cane" has been captured by PAC Space Corps?

The fifth fleet suffered heavy losses?

Retreat? Lost?

Heck, how does one withdraw from the middle of the city?

-

10 October 2172, partially cloudy (added)

I was the only one left.

James was done for, Zach has gone insane.

Did PAC soldiers take pity on me? I was somehow expecting that when I got ripped out of the power armor, I would have been beaten, had my limbs broken, and finally be shot dead.

But that doesn't seem likely.

PAC soldier are very united, and under the directive of the commander, no one would dare breach it. Although the yellow monkey seems to want to cut my head off. In the end, he didn't do it though.

I was familiar with that look of animosity, as if wanting to tear me apart.

I can understand that perhaps what we did in school was over the top. But I can't be blamed for that. Although I am a devout believer, my soldiers also need to relieve their stress. Maybe I should have stopped the guy in Georgia State?

Come on, who cares? Everyone's dead.

-

I was forced into a truck loaded with captives. There were plenty of people like us in there.

Fortunately, they didn't confiscate my diary or I would have gone insane.

It is imperative to keep a diary. That's right, it's very important.

I'll try not to provoke the guy who escorted us as he already killed two unlucky fools.

-

15 October 2171, sunny.

We were brought to somewhere far away from the battlefield. There were a lot of mountains here, also a lot of tunnels, and some factories built underground.

I settled down after seeing these because I knew I had no chance of ever returning. Exchange prisoners of war? Hehe, if I say this, would they let me go?

The people in the truck was separated into two groups: one group to the North and one group to the South.

I have a foreboding feeling that one group would die. Of course, we are all going to die in the end, I just pray that it won't be an ugly death.

After coming to the underground base, our faces were soon branded with barcodes and we got our own bed.

Mhmm...this place is a bit like a concentration camp.

Thank God, my diary is not confiscated.

-

17 November 2172, unknown

I don't know what the weather on the surface is because we haven't seen the sun in a long time. Are they still fighting out there? Or has the war stopped? Of course, we are already deemed "dead", so even if the war ended, I'm afraid we can't return home.

The work isn't hard but it is rather boring and we get beaten a lot.

Someone tried to run but was apparently killed. We are incarcerated along with the federal death row prisoners. The guy, who slept above me, was a political prisoner. He was very thin with little hair left on his head. He talked to me in English and asked me if I believed in God.

I said I don't or rather I believed in him before.

He didn't mind as he continued to chat about other things. To be honest, I was quite disgusted with any topics related to political point of view.

But he seemed to become increasingly more frustrated.

Thank God, he got shot not long after.

21 November 2172, unknown

There are dead people being dragged away every day, however, there are more people being brought in.

Maybe the war is about to end? After all, there are less familiar faces and more Asian faces are being brought in.

But what made me unsettled is that I spotted some Slavs from the latest batch of captives.

Did PAC and CCCP go to war as well? Luckily, that's a great news for NATO.

However, how long will a war of this level last?

-

25 December 2172, unknown (maybe it is snowing?)

Today is Christmas without Christmas tree and candles, and buttery cornmeal porridge.

I don't believe in God, but I still prayed devoutly and pray to my diary. My inmate said I am crazy, I disagreed. Someone had tried to steal my diary, I beat him to a pulp. I broke his nose, and we were both taken in.

I left the journal under my pillow but no one dared to touch it.

Perhaps I scared them? I trust that they are all unafraid of death—me neither—but I believe that no one wants to die.

No can beat me here. I am a special force, while they are all political prisoners.

Suckers.

-

6 May 2173, unknown

I am not sure if it was earthquake or airstrike. It's probably an airstrike.

Everyone quivered at the corner but I didn't. I read the journal from the beginning again.

I didn't have time to write every day. Most of the time, I only left a date. It was hard to find a pen, so if there was nothing special, I choose to leave it blank.

The barrage lasted for a long time, but it stopped eventually. Someone mentioned relocating and I smiled.



Where to?

-

14 June 2173, cloudy

The day of relocation came. Unfortunately, I wasn't welcome by the sun.

It was snowing outside, and the sky was covered with radiation dust. Is this what they called nuclear winter? Being able to see snow in summer was quite an experience.

The soldiers guarding us all wore protective suit, but we only wore a jacket. They didn't plan on using us for a long as they only gave us an iodine chip.

We were still left in the truck.

When I left, I was surprised to find out that few mountains have gone missing. Or should I say, became pits.

I remember that's where the group of people from the North headed to work.

-

20 June 2173, sunny

Surprisingly, today is sunny.

Amazingly, I returned to Wanghai City.

Order seems to have been restored here as there are already some citizens living in rural areas. Of course, they didn't look well, probably the unlucky people that didn't manage to hide in shelters. At any rate, this is a good sign that the war is over.

Or at the very least, a ceasefire.

Still it has nothing with us.

I was escorted into an underground survival base or a research facility? This is because survival base wouldn't open in less than a year which should be the same in every country.

A man in a white lab coat welcomed me and smiled at me, but I only felt chill in my hands and feet.

It's as though he was looking at a white mouse?

Insane, this is insane.

For the first time, I experience real fear. Dammit!

-

I can't remember the time, unknown.

The diary was confiscated.

Ripped into pieces.

But so what, I memorized everything.

-

They are crazy. Do they think they can create XXXX like this?  
(Scratched out)

Wait, why am I still normal?

-

Well, now it's certain that they are insane.

If someone sees this diary, everything would have been worthwhile. I tried to leave something behind, but it was futile.

All clues will be hidden.

But I still firmly believe that there are smart people out there who will find the clue.

Why am I still conscious? Why hasn't it been erased?

I should have been dead.

Well, before I die, I hope that Asian girl will forgive me for my sins... that's probably not going to happen though.

(Colonel George's final words, pays tribute to the NATO flag)

-

Jiang Chen's hands and feet felt cold after reading it.

There must be something that's missing, but what was it exactly? This wasn't normal...no, what was normal?

Inside the drawer, there was a gun lying next to the diary.

Revolver!

Hand trembling, Jiang Chen swallowed after finally picking up the firearm. Feeling the cold metal texture, he unloaded the

magazine. The copper colored metal bullets burned his eyes.

It's a real gun!

Inside the drawer in the activity room of the school library! What the hell is this place? And not to mention the insane Colonel's Diary.

It's only year 2171, how would the journal spoke of something from the year 2173? Wait...time travel?

Jiang Chen felt an onslaught of headache. He clutched his forehead and sat back on the chair. His head was a mess. It's as though everything was a déjà vu, but he couldn't explain where the feeling came from.

[Am I forgetting something?]

Jiang Chen frowned he tried to search for every nook and cranny of his memory in the hope of finding clues.

But he didn't even know what the clue was.

From learning how to speak when he was a baby, to his elementary education, and then his junior high...up until this moment. Every piece of memory was so vivid.

Where's the problem?

[Wait, why is it so clear? I can even remember the details of changing diaper?]

Thinking of this, Jiang Chen suddenly blanked out, he felt he had grasped onto something, but he must have missed a detail, just a tiny bit.

It was at this time that he suddenly heard an unexpected knock.

"Are you in there?"

An abrupt but gentle voice struck at Jiang Chen's heart like a hammer...

# Chapter 94: Fear from the Sky

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## Chapter 94: Fear from the Sky

"Are you in there?"

Tingting's voice came through.

Just as Jiang Chen was about to open his mouth, his throat felt like it was stuck with cotton known as fear.

He lifted his terminal slowly.

<4:25 pm>

[There were still 15 minutes left before the class ends, so how can she be in here? That's really strange. Even if the sports instructor wants her to find me, why would she go to the activity room? It's as if—]

"I know. I've been watching you for a long time."

Suddenly, the two familiar but surreal confessions surfaced in his head.

A frightening thought crept into his mind.

...being watched?

A drop of cold sweat rolled down his forehead as Jiang Chen held his breath. He didn't even dare to make a sound. Instinct told him that there must be something wrong, but he couldn't explain where the problem came from.

[Tingting is a stalker? How is that possible? But she is so graceful... wait, graceful? It seems that it was her who took the initiative to push me down yesterday. Usually, she would be reading under the window but today...]

Jiang Chen searched through today's memory. Yao Tingting's watching him, being engrossed in her terminal, paying attention to class, watching him smile...

A disquieting feeling crept all over his body.

"I heard there's a ghost at the ground floor of the library. Have you seen it?"

The knocking sound was light, but it pierced through his heart like a hammer. He couldn't explain the reason, but his instincts told him that terrible things would happen if he opened the door this time.

Jiang Chen let the beads of sweat rolled across his face as he sat there motionlessly. He looked at the drawer where the gun was, but it failed to bring him even a scant trace of security.



Like drums playing, the pace of knocking seemed to increase and grew louder.

All of a sudden, a violent, smashing sound transmitted through the door. The frantic, smashing sound made every single one of Jiang Chen's muscles tightened due to tension, and his facial expression morphed into a stunned expression.

The sound, however, suddenly came to an abrupt stop.

...followed by the sound of fading footsteps.

[Has he given up?] Jiang Chen let out a sigh of relief. He then touched his chest and felt a wet sensation from his hand.

It was then that he figured out that his body was drenched in sweat without even realizing it.

"Now that I think about it, the uncomfortable feeling came from the robot yesterday morning. No, to be precise, it should be during that morning class..." Jiang Chen realized something.

Yes, it was at that time when the entire class was staring at him. His heart responded with an eerie feeling known as 'Uncanny Valley' effect.

[Could it be...all the students are robots?] An odd expression

appeared on his face as he thought that the very idea was preposterous.

Why? He grew up with Zhao Peng together, Qian Han, who was sitting in front even gave him a love letter, and Yao Tingting...

Jiang Chen suddenly frowned.

Where did all the books that Yao Tingting always read go?

BOOM!

The violent tremor almost threw him on the ground as the window produced a loud, sharp sound. He got up hurriedly, ran to the window and discovered a shocking scene.

A blue light hit the dome protecting this city. The light blue particle disintegrated followed by the thinning air membrane.

There was no sound as the concave barrier opened a gap in the center and the blue light faded away.

Suddenly, countless numbers of dense, black dots dropped from the sky, each carrying a trail of air waves behind. Those were NATO's airdrop soldiers, as well as the bombs used to disguise them.

It was, however, at this moment that the ground fired a series of

orange flare missiles to the ground. It was the anti-aircraft missiles stationed in the city...

A loud rumble fell from the sky and a series of explosions filled the sky with bright sparks. The deafening air defense alarm broke the city sky accompanied by the cry and scream from the distant street, which woke Jiang Chen up from his stupor.

Not even a single warning.

"It's s a fuck\*ng war! This can't be happening..." He looked at the sky, terrified. Jiang Chen retreated from the window and rushed outside the door.

The news already announced that when the air defense alarm got triggered, everyone should immediately go to the nearest defense shelter, and the sanctuary would be forcefully closed once it reached the right time and go into a dormant mode.

Jiang Chen didn't have time to get confused as his priority was to stay alive. He glanced at the table before he left the activity room; he gritted his teeth and reluctantly sprinted downstairs.

There was a gun on the table, but he didn't think it would bring him any semblance of security. If he really encountered a NATO soldier, he's afraid that it would be more dangerous to wield a gun.

Moreover, according to the rules of war, they usually didn't shoot civilians. Not only it was a waste of bullets, it was also quite

troublesome...

He tried to comfort himself as he dashed down the stairs towards the gate of the school and ran for his life. At this time, however, a massive explosion broke out in the sky in the distance from the center of the city. He felt the scorching heat wave despite the distance of 100 km away.

Mushroom cloud.

It was a nuclear bomb!

"Fu\*k." Jiang Chen stared at the orange mushroom cloud and the falling black dots with quivering eyes.

BOOM!

The intense shockwave almost blew him away. He tried to raise his arm to cover his face. From the rapid airflow of the cylindrical airdrop pods came out several soldiers in power armor.

There was simply no room for escape.

Jiang Chen's shoulders relaxed, signaling that he had given up, and his face gave way to a wry smile. Why was his reaction so calm, even he himself didn't have any ideas.

The last thing he saw was a gun barrel.

-

BOOM!

Struggling to open his eyes, the first thing Jiang Chen saw was the wooden floor of the gymnasium. He realized he was thrown on the ground.

He struggled to stand up...his chest and joint throbbed in pain, but he couldn't let out a sound because of fear.

The gym was filled with people, students, and teachers... Everyone's terrified face had hopelessness written all over them as NATO soldiers circled around. The cold barrels were ominous.

No one dared to make a sound as they quietly watched Jiang Chen who was thrown on the ground.

"Jiang Chen, are you okay?" Yao Tingting anxiously hurried to his side.

He felt the body temperature enveloping him as he exerted all his effort to open his puffy eyes.

He caught a glimpse of graceful face fraught with tears.

"Tingting? You're...also here?"

"Mhmm! What, how are you?"

The silvery voice was tearful. He felt the softness touching the swell on his face as he forced out a smile. He wanted to lift his hand to wipe off her tears, comfort her, and embrace her, however...

"Drag that girl over here."

"Yes."

Two soldiers in power armors walked over.

"Let me go! Ah—"

"What are you doing!" Jiang Chen watched the person forcefully drag Yao Tingting away from him in horror.

"Jiang Chen, save me! No!"

Jiang Chen desperately tried to hold on to her, but he was met with a boot on his face. The kick almost made him lose his consciousness again.

In the corner of Jiang Chen's blurry eyes, he saw the soldiers who dragged Yao Tingting away took off his mask. It was a pale, devil-like face that was currently mocking him.

"Listen up, hostages—that's right, you guys are all hostages—your so-called Holy Barrier System has already been broken by our space-based weapon. Don't count on being rescued, stay there obediently, and pray that your fathers won't blow you up as well." The person standing at the stadium of the gym seemed to be the leader of the squad as he was using the loudspeaker of the power armor.

"Tingting..." Jiang Chen struggled to crawl to the figure being dragged away.

"Boss, this girl is quite pretty. It would be a pity if we hang her outside. Hehe, what if..." The white soldier had a leery grin as he held the girl up. He seemed to be pleased by her frightened appearance and almost sobbing figure.

Another soldier also took off the armor mask and exposed a black face and white teeth. "Are all people from Georgia (State in the US) perverted like this? But sir, I do agree with his point of view, hehe..."

What are you trying to do!

Jiang Chen's heart suddenly ached. He bit his lips as he struggled to stand up to his feet, however, his woozy head kept him unstable.

"No—" A shrill cry resounded throughout the gym.

Seeing the commander nodded, the soldier then tore the white floral dress apart...

In front of everyone.

"Stop!" Jiang Chen opened his mouth as his finger almost penetrated through the hard wooden floor.

His bloodshot eyes were ferocious.

However, it wasn't him who screamed out.

Was that Zhao Peng?

"No!" Jiang Chen reached out his hand to his childhood friend in horror.

BANG!

Smoke floated from the muzzle.

"Beautiful, man! Bull's-eye!"

"Hahaha." The soldier heard his comrade's compliment before he made an exaggerated shooting gesture at the crowd. He was gratified to see the crowd screaming and scrambling backward in terror.



"Don't, don't come over." Yao Tingting shrunk back on the ground as she tried to use the torn pieces of clothes to cover her naked body.

The white soldier with perverted smile strapped the gun to his waist as he walked towards Yao Tingting who was scampering backward. "Don't worry, we'll do it one by one."

"Jiang Chen, save me! Jiang Chen... Wooo—"

The young, beautiful Chinese teacher from next class stood up, her expression wore a decided humiliated expression. She was trembling but refused to flinch.

"Let the girl go, I'll take her place."

The black soldier standing on the sidelines laughed, and then came and grabbed her by the collar, ignoring her scrambling limbs due to her difficulty in breathing and threw her on the stadium.

"You guys can go together. We have plenty of brothers here."

Eyes filled with sorrow.

Dead eyes without the soul.

And dilated pupils because of the shocking horror.

Blood covered every single inch of Jiang Chen's eyes.

At this time, however, an unprecedented clarity he had never experienced before eradicated all the tyrannical emotions in his heart.

"Hehe... are you guys done fooling around?"

Jiang Chen closed his eyes carelessly. He struggled to shift and then sat on the ground.

His mouth curled up into a sneer and his eyes regained its tranquility.

"The secret teller?"

# Chapter 95: The Imperfection in the Perfect Plan

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[Fury: Muscle Strength +20, Reflex +19, Brain Cell Strength +17. Special ability: Killer instinct, the ability to perceive the location of the heart with any of the five senses.]

He didn't expect to enter <Fury> right here.

Jiang Chen coldly scanned the bodies without red dots, ignoring the pairs of lifeless eyes staring at him, and finally stopping his sight on Yao Tingting.

Zhao Peng lying in the pool of blood, the teacher struggling on the ground beneath the soldiers, the students, even the soldiers...

No heart.

Everyone was a sham, as though they were nothing but an empty shell.

Including Yao Tingting.

"Oh? How did you figure it out?" Yao Tingting paused for a moment before a smile erupted on her face and stood up naked.

It was a peculiar sight—a smiling girl standing while naked. Beside her was the monster with a ferocious expression about to

bring her down to the ground, but the monster was cemented in mid-air.

He looked into Yao Tingting's eyes dispassionately and said, "Because I have an annoying ability, and you happen to have no heart."

Yao Tingting was momentarily stunned before revealing her signature smile again. She then raised her delicate finger and drew in the air, and a holographic screen appeared out of thin air beside her body.

"Hmmm... so that's how it is. Increase in three body stats and a skill that can "see" the heart? This isn't a friendly bug." A peculiar smile curved on her mouth as she examined the stats on the panel.

"Hehe, although I had formed a variety of conjectures, never would I have thought that..this is a game, right?" Jiang Chen gazed at the beautiful yet pure face as he squeezed the words out of his mouth, "The secret teller, huh?"

Just now, he finally understood the question that had been plaguing him. The effect of Brain Cell Strength +17 as the result of <Fury> was not an increase in intelligence but rather to break through the barrier in his memory and regained his consciousness.

"Oh, almost but not quite. I am the secret protector. Perhaps it's time for the next round?" Yao Tingting clapped her hands in delight.

The secret protector? There were actually two "people"?

The occasional explosion in the sky suddenly stopped, and the war outside came to a halt with the sound of the clap.

The colors of the world began to fade starting from the corner of the stadium as bits and pieces dissipated gradually.

"Do you intend to continue this boring game?" Jiang Chen sneered as he said with disdain.

"Why not?"

The silvery laughter sounded disturbing.

"I am looking forward to your next round of performance." After looking at Jiang Chen one last time, Yao Tingting faded along with everything in that world.

Really?

He looked at the interdimensional bracelet on his wrist. The bracelet's ability was not copied into this world, so there was no way to return to the modern world in the game.

[I just have to rely on other means to break through the game...]

The floor was already disintegrating as Jiang Chen silently watched his body along with the fragments dissipate into the abyss...

-

11 June 2171, summer

The diary only had dates in it, and no other texts had been written in it.

He felt a slight dizziness as though he had just taken a nap, and everything that just happened was like a reverie.

Dropping down the pen, Jiang Chen looked around the "familiar" room.

"Fury is still in effect."

"Could it be because of the increase in Brain Cell Strength that my memory was not erased?" He faintly closed his eyes as he searched for the clues in his memory.

Memory before entering the game was retained, the N cycle memory was saved, and the N-1 cycle memory was missing.

When he opened his eyes, his line of sight caught the diary to the electronic clock on the table.

<7:37 pm>

"So, this is the starting point of the game. Then, all previous memories should be false."

In reality, it didn't feel good to negate the realistic memory one by one. It's as if you're living a great life, then one night you had a nightmare, a mysterious figure told you that the world in the dream was the reality, and when you woke up you'd go into a virtual world.

"Yao Tingting is the secret protector. No, to be more accurate, she should have been replaced by a secret at some point..." That book was a clue, and Jiang Chen desperately searched for the details in his memory. [It appears that when I shared the "spoiler," the secret guardian noticed the discrepancy. It was just a sense of déjà vu, but it had thought that I "recovered my memory"?]

It seemed that from that point on, the book in Yao Tingting's hands disappeared.

That person had been replaced since then.

[So if this is the case, it suspected that I woke up from the hypnotism, so it replaced Yao Tingting's identity and joined the game as a participant?]

Therefore, anyone could be the secret protector.

[Wait, what's the point of this game?]

Frowning, he sat quietly on the desk as he recalled the diary in the activity room on the second floor of the library.

<I was escorted into an underground survival base or a research facility?>

<So what, I have memorized everything!>

<They are crazy. Do they think they can create XXX like this? (Scratched out)>

And Yao Tingting's words:

"I know. I have been paying attention to you."

The identity of the Informant and the secret protector...

All the clues strung together like a key and opened the lock in his heart.

The corner of his mouth slightly raised up as he leaned back on the chair.

[That diary should be the key to breakthrough the game. No



wonder the Secret Guardian always tried to keep me away from the library. Whenever I approach the library, it would see all kinds of method to stop me.]

Whether it was the so-called ghost in the library or the furious guard.

What the secret protector didn't know, however, was that the more it tried to cover up something, the more suspicious he became. It can be said that its constant attempt to stop him actually pushed him to where the truth was located.

Even it wiped the memory in his head, it can't wipe the strong feeling of déjà vu.

[Where did I see this before? Did I seem to be here before? I have experienced this before...]

Whether it was the drama airing or the opened activity room, everything had the feeling of déjà vu. Perhaps he was there N-x week ago, but because there was no memory retention; therefore, it ignorantly entered into the next cycle.

<Force Restart> could perhaps seal the memory and remove the clues, but it cannot remove the constant feeling of déjà vu, in the end, this feeling led to finding the evidence he searched for in the previous cycle.

And then because the N's cycle led him into <Fury>, all the

evidence was saved to the N+1 week.

If he didn't manage to jump out of the loop, the game would probably go on and on.

"Hehe, what kind of game is this, this is absolutely insane."

[A game designed for the purpose of an experiment. It inhumanely put people into the game like a lab rat. Then simulate the plot, collect data, therefore, allowing the intermediary artificial intelligence to evolve into advanced artificial intelligence? Is this the experiment that the Colonel mentioned in his diary?]

Jiang Chen thought calmly.

[There was still a lot of suspicions. For example, the secret protector is the absolute controller of the game, then I wouldn't be able to beat it at any rate.

But the peculiar cleaning robots, the opened activity room, the diary left as a clue, these obvious bugs are not removed after countless amount of cycles but had been completely preserved. The secret protector even had to interfere with my actions by actively intervening with the plot to prevent me from getting close to the library.]

In conclusion, the secret protector's power in the game is similar to that of a Game Master, but it cannot change the game itself.

Also, if the purpose of the game was to allow it to evolve into an advanced AI by observing humans and collecting data, it wouldn't make sense if it was granted the power to change the game. A good analogy would be: if the measuring data is "unattractive," and someone manually added one or two zeroes in an experiment, then it wouldn't be considered as an experiment anymore.

Its power was limited and not invincible.

Jiang Chen picked up its pen, drew three circles in the diary, and labeled it separately:

Safe Zone, Neutral Zone, and Danger Zone.

"If I perform "illogical" action, then everyone would look at me like I'm a "robot," because of the confused thinking, which will automatically trigger the "Uncanny Valley" effect. The intermediate artificial intelligence may have analysis ability, but too much calculation will result in "lag"? Or "confusion"? On the contrary, basic AI can only respond logically and can't think, so it does not produce "confusion" and the like. So, NPC should be made up of low-level AI's?" Jiang Chen mumbled to himself as he labeled the school as Danger Zone.

The activity room on the second floor of the library should be the Safe Zone because Yao Tingting couldn't enter it. Jiang Chen wrote it in the Safe Zone.

[Should NATO invasion be considered as an event? Also, to

collect data, the Secret Guardian should be in control of the "switch" to advance the plot, otherwise, repeating the same cycle would just result in similar data.] It was an important point, so Jiang Chen jotted it down in his diary.

He pulled out the drawer and saw two movie tickets. A smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face. "If there is no irregularity, then the plot should be: asking her out, confession, watching a movie, possible sex, NATO invasion. It simulated the first love to completed devastation. In this case, any of the scene that could trigger the plot should belong to Danger Zone under the absolute control of the Secret Guardian ."

Yao Tingting's home and the movie theater he has yet to visit were categorized under the Danger Zone.

Because of the incomplete plot in the last cycle, a lot of clues became available Jiang Chen scanned the room and wrote "Protagonist's Home" under the Safe Zone area.

"The street should be a Neutral Zone, whereby it lacks the ability to trigger plot." He flipped his pen and wrote street under the Neutral Zone before he lifted his eyes to look at the digital clock.

<8:07 pm>

It already exceeded the maximum duration of half an hour limit, but <Fury> has yet to be deactivated. Therefore, the passage of time in the game is unequal to the passage of time in real world. In terms of efficiency, the longer the user experienced in the game,

the shorter the time passed in reality so the data gathered in the real world time frame will be more...

[Perhaps that I already experienced N cycles, but it may only be a few seconds in reality? With the processing speed of the advanced computer, that is absolutely a possibility; however, it would put a lot of strain on the mind.]

Thinking of this, Jiang Chen let out a breath of relief. The time he agreed on with Sun Jiao was two hours, and if he had been here for a month or two already, he was afraid that it would be then too late to return to the ground.]

[Speaking of that, by letting me activate<Fury>, that talkative thing still expects itself to win?]

The tip of his lips curled up on his mouth.

That's right, in a game that relied on hypnotism, Brain Cell Strength was a huge bug.

Hypnotism would no longer be effective on him.

[From here on in, the "game" officially begins.]

# Chapter 96: Inescapable

---

Jiang Chen opened the door.

"There's not much difference between day and night. If I am consistently being monitored, then even selecting daytime would not increase my chances of winning. Or maybe, it is safer in the day since the majority of the people will be in their home, and there would be less pawns that the secret protector could use."

He went downstairs and saw the cleaning robot.

It still gave off the same hollow look that instinctively produced a disquieting feeling.

[The cleaning robot left the first clue, so it should be considered "friendly"? Although he didn't know who left this clue, but presumably, it wasn't on the secret protector's side,] Jiang Chen thought as he walked past the robot and turned back.

The robot was looking at another direction.

"South? Is there something over there? There was also another cleaning robot in front of the library. In the N cycle, it blocked the security guard for me." Jiang Chen looked south, but the tall buildings blocked his view. From the general direction, it should be located in the center of the city.

"Wait a minute, when Yao Tingting took me away from the

library, the robot at the door also appeared to be looking at the same direction after exchanging eye contact with me."

Suddenly, Jiang Chen realized this clue and his face turned exulted. He then walked to the robot that seemed to be lagging.

He took out the terminal, followed the robot's direction, and drew a line on the map. The line skidded across the boundary of the town center.

"There is also another robot in front of the library door. With only two-line intersection, it would be difficult to guess the accurate location on the map. Therefore, there must be another robot. With three-line intersection, it would be able to pinpoint and mark a possible area. There should be something in there that could help me beat the game. But where is the third robot?"

Jiang Chen frowned. [The N cycle plot was incomplete with this logic.]

He put his hand into his pocket and grabbed the two movie tickets, his face then lit up with a triumphant smile.

"In front of the movie theater? That should be right."

If nothing happened, the two movie tickets should serve its purpose on the third day. But the secret protector's intervention forced the plot to advance and even introduced a huge move of canceling the holiday. This made the movie plot never occurred

and triggered the sex scene.

[I see.]

Without hesitation, Jiang rushed to the nearest subway and then headed downtown.

He sprinted out of the subway, jogged across two streets and stopped in front of the movie theater, gasping for air.

It was that cleaning robot, and it was looking straight into his eyes. Then, it looked away...

Southwest!

He pulled out his terminal again and drew a line on the map. Without stopping for a moment, he then returned to the subway and caught the last train.

Breathlessly, Jiang Chen sat on the cold, hard chair. He looked around the empty train and looked at the time.

<9:39 pm>

[It's already this late?]

The train arrived at the station as Jiang Chen quickly rushed to



the school's direction and stopped in front of the school gate.

[The school is considered as Danger Zone, so going directly to the activity room on the second floor...will be pretty difficult.] Troubled by the thought, he looked around and looked up.

[I'm afraid that the Secret Guardian must be closely monitoring my move, and just waiting to make a move as soon as I enter...]

Thinking of this, his face showed a wry smile.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath and after observing the height of the gate, he rushed towards the door.

[If it had been before, two meters would be unreachable but...]

Jiang Chen leaped easily across the gate. The increase in muscle strength due to <Fury> was perfectly replicated within the game; indeed, the game data is based on physical data in the real world.

The shrill alarm sounded instantly.

Having predicted that this would happen, he cursed and rushed to the direction of the library.

"Stop!"

It was the security guard!

Jiang Chen ignored him, knowing full well that with his current muscle strength, no one would be able to catch up to him. Even if all the "units" in the school were pawns of the Secret Guardian, it shouldn't be able to change the body stats of the characters.

It took less than ten seconds for Jiang Chen to outran the security by 100 meters from the security room. Then, he spotted the cleaning robot at the door.

Southeast!

With a rough view from the street light, Jiang Chen did not slow down the slightest as he slammed into the glass door of the library.

"Warning! Security system activated."

100 meters more!

The metal gate of the library started closing, and Jiang Chen, who noticed this, gritted his teeth and accelerated. He turned around and maintained his velocity and smashed into the closed glass door.

CRASH!

The glass door was smashed into pieces. At the last possible

second, Jiang Chen broke into the library with the metal gate behind firmly shut.

Jiang Chen felt the painful cut from his arms, legs and face but didn't have time to tend to his wounds. Ignoring the glass shards on the floor, he scrambled to his feet and continued towards the stairs.

Second floor.

End of the hallway.

Activity room!

The door is shut!

Jiang Chen slammed the door, but the door remained firmly shut.

Did it close after the security system got activated?

"Damn! How could it be like this!" Jiang Chen desperately beat down the door.

[Could it be the activity room door is closed at night? That's impossible... What should I do!]

"Haha, where are you going to run now, you bloody thief!" the security guard's frightening voice from the other end of the hallway made him drenched in cold sweat.

"Fu\*k, how did you get in with the metal door being shut?]

Jiang Chen swore in his mind, but since it was not the time to think about it, he quickly forced himself to calm down.

With a start, he suddenly remembered that he had acquired an access to the terminal using the electronic key on the desk when he turned on the air conditioner with it.

[No, after the timeline is reset, the access should also be removed...

Wait a minute—if the activity room is a special place, then the "whitelisted" ID's will probably be retained even after the timeline reset!]

Jiang Chen didn't hesitate anymore after seeing the twisted and hideous face along with the taser in his hand from the end of the corridor.

He took out the terminal, connected to the local network, and opened the electronic lock.

CLICK.

The light sound was like an angel's voice to Jiang Chen as his heart turned ecstatic. Then, he rushed to the door and slammed it shut.

DONG!

The frustrated kicking sound was transmitted through the door. Just as he thought, the room's existence was rather unique, a place similar to the "backdoor" of the game. As for the reason for its existence and why the <Colonel's Diary> was kept in here, everything still remained a mystery.

However, he had a hunch that he was getting closer to the truth.

At the same time, a white light pierced the night sky and light up the entire city.

Jiang Chen quickly went to the window and looked at the bright sky with astonishment.

The bright, white light fell down like rain drops as they left ripples on the city's dome. The deafening explosion soon followed as the "Holy Barrier System" protecting Wanghai was broken through.

[What kind of energy weapon is this?]

There was no time to hesitate, Jiang Chen rushed towards the table, opened the drawer, and picked up the pistol inside.

A violent explosion came from the outside and made the window viciously vibrate.

Was that an airdrop pod?

Jiang Chen was alarmed by the explosion coming from downstairs. It should be NATO soldiers forcing their way in.

Looking at the gun in his hand, he suddenly realized the purpose of the gun.

Jiang Chen took a final glance at the triangle area where the three lines intersected on the map.

He disengaged the safety and loaded the gun.

He raised the gun and aimed the muzzle at his own temple; a grim smile appearing on his lips.

BANG!

# Chapter 97: Zombie Invasion

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How much courage would it take to shoot your own head?

The question was quite complicated and would depend on the situation.

Despite knowing that this was a game, the "memory" of growing up would still be vivid.

How would you describe this feeling? Well, imagine this: you've been living a good life, then one day, you suddenly had the urge to question the authenticity of the world as there was an extra bit of memory added. Despite being fully confident that the newly added memory was the real memory and all the previous memories were fake. And now you had an idea that as long you as die, you could escape the game and return to the real world.

There was no pain.

It's just like closing his eyes for a while.

Jiang Chen woke up from the "dream" again.

<7:37 pm>

At that moment, however, his hand was not holding a pen but rather a black revolver.

"Looks like you can't escape the game through death... Make sense, if it's that easy to escape then the easiest way would be to jump down from the window." Jiang Chen let out a self-deprecating smile and glanced outside the window.

The pistol following him after death was a huge BUG.

Jiang Chen played with the gun in his hands and unloaded the magazine.

16 rounds—the magazine was full again, so this gun should also play a "role". Although he didn't know how it happened, it appeared that the bullets were being replenished after every reset of the game.

With the gun stuffed in his pocket, Jiang Chen opened the bedroom door, passed through the living room and headed towards the door.

It was already night time but there shouldn't be no difference inside the game.

He pulled out his terminal and opened the map. The position marked by the triangle was gone, but he firmly remembered it.

The Xipu Hospital in the northern district.



He put the terminal away and rushed to the direction of the subway.

<8:07 pm>

There were only a few pedestrians in the subway. Perhaps it was because the situation was a bit tense recently, everyone avoided traveling. After the rush hour, only few people could be seen in the subway. Sitting on a cold chair and waiting for the train to slowly accelerate, Jiang Chen sighed as he looked at the small TV on the wall.

The host was cracking jokes with his assistants and the audience was all laughing; he, however, couldn't smile.

[If everything is fake, then what about the memory of these past 17 years?

Am I too deep into this?]

Jiang Chen shook his head and touched the gun in his pocket. The cold, metallic feeling gave him a trace of comfort.

Not only could he integrate into another world, but he even acquired another set of memory. Even after experiencing death a countless number of times, only seconds passed by in reality. Had the future of technology and science been developed to this extent?

Or rather had it already been terrifying to this point?

He somehow felt a little despondent at the moment and gave a wry smile.

He just wanted to end this bloody game, and then return the memory that wasn't his back to the server.

Creak!

The light suddenly went out without warning, and the carriage shook violently. As soon as it happened, Jiang Chen immediately reached out his hands and grabbed the handrail beside him.

Jiang Chen's muscles stretched violently as the pain almost made him broke his teeth, but his hands grasping the handrail did not let go.

"Ah—!" The passengers, who didn't keep their balance, began to fall as they smashed into the front of the train like thin paper.

PA!

Blood covered his line of sight.

Enduring his churning stomach, the forceful pulling almost made his eyes burst, and the veins on his arm were about to explode.

BOOM!

The force was so strong that eventually, Jiang Chen could not hold on anymore and fiercely crashed into heaps of dead body.

A trail of gruesome sparks flashed across the window. The train appeared to have a rear-end collision. It crashed into the rear of a preceding train and derailed with it.

Jiang Chen frantically scrambled to his feet. He dragged his dizzy head and hit the emergency door release button, however, the door failed to open.

[Has the emergency circuit been destroyed too?]

"Damn!"

He couldn't think for long because if he delayed any longer, another train would have come from behind...

While shivering, he took out the terminal in pain. He pulled out the cord beside the emergency exit button and connected it to the terminal.

Fortunately, it was still functional.

After gaining access, Jiang Chen hurriedly pressed the release button and unlocked the access to the safety hammer through the direct connection.

Jiang Chen gritted his teeth as he took out the red safety hammer from the partition wall. He used his entire body's strength to smash the window.

A layer of white mist along the hammer spread from the point of impact.

Another swing.

CRUSH!

The double-pane window was smashed into pieces as white mist burst forth.

Just as Jiang Chen was about to climb out of the window, he felt a hand grabbed his leg. He turned around and saw a woman with dreadful face and pale, white eyes, and then she opened her badly mutilated mouth.

He swung his hammer and smashed the woman's head into pieces.

[Fu\*k? Zombies?]

"This time it's a biochemical plot." It appeared that the plot that Secret Guardian could trigger was not limited to NATO invasion.

There was no time to think as Jiang Chen noticed that there were some limbs twitching in the heap of bloody corpse. He carried the safety hammer in his hand, jumped out of the window, rolled on the ground, and climbed onto the platform on the other side.

SCREECH!

From afar came a screeching sound; it was another train!

Jiang Chen desperately ran 100 meters outside the underground tunnel exit. Almost as soon as he had just turned into the groove on the wall of the tunnel, there was another explosion behind him. The broken parts left screeching noise on the concrete wall. The train twisted into a ball as the door plate broke off and embedded into the wall not far away behind Jiang Chen.

Jiang Cheng suppressed the violent throbbing of his heart. He pulled the sliding door with all his strength, but the door didn't budge.

Another swing.

The door didn't break, but the concrete holding the door was shattered by his brute force.

Jiang Chen pushed the door down and followed the zigzag shaped stairs and quickly ran outside. When he opened the security door and stepped on the ground, the scene that greeted him stunned him.

Like a scene straight from an apocalypse.

The entire street was in mayhem: cars collided into each other or exploded or broke down on the road. The entire area was a mess.

Horrificed screams came one after another. People fought...or more accurately, zombies were hunting the fleeing humans. The pairs of pale, white eyes were much more frightening under the light.

Occasionally, there were people who would smash the window open and frantically jump out, but their fate was either to fall to their death or to be devoured by the zombies below.

"Hungry—"

Jiang Chen felt a sudden chill on his back as he turned around and found a zombie was heading towards him.

He didn't think as he swung the hammer, then the zombie's head flew out like a golf ball.

Suppressing the nausea, Jiang Chen hurriedly took out the map to verify his location. He was only two streets north of the hospital. Fortunately, the train collision was close to the destination.

After confirming his location, he immediately ran to the other side of the street.

Zombies were stronger during night time. The night devoid of UV lights couldn't restrict its fighting prowess.

Of course, these zombies were still within the first stage of mutation. The useless fat was still attached to the body. In a few years time, once the zombies metamorphosed the body fats into dense muscles, their speed would be more than double.

However, there was no use talking about this as even "fresh" zombies would be impossible to defeat once they banded together. Jiang Chen smashed another zombie in front of him before jumping on top of the car. Before he got surrounded by the zombies, he hopped on another car three meters away.

Jiang Chen's shoes left a huge dent on the roof. Not stopping to take a look, he then landed on another vehicle.

With the power of <Fury>, the distance was nothing to him, and by hopping on the vehicles, he narrowly escaped from the zombie-infested street.

His feet landed heavily on the concrete ground before the howling zombies could swarm around him. His hammer swung and killed off two zombies as he desperately ran to the direction of the hospital.

100 meters!

20 meters!

He darted to the stairs in front of the door. The hall was infested with zombies. Fortunately, it was night time so there weren't many people in the hallway. With a couple of dim lights, he could roughly make out the situation inside the hall. There were few women in nurse clothes rushing towards him with gaping bloody mouth.

Jiang Chen gritted his teeth as he motioned his already sore arm muscles to make another hit. It shattered the zombies into pieces; however, another zombie rushed towards him from the side and attacked him.

"Fu\*k! Ah..."

His left arm was firmly bitten. It was the first time that he had been made keenly aware of the danger of zombies.

The zombies were beginning to circle him. Jiang Chen kicked the zombies away and took out the revolver.

BANG!

The bullet penetrated the zombies head.



BANG!

Jiang Chen's facial muscles twisted because of the pain in his left arm, but he resisted the pain while shooting with his right hand and scrambling towards the safety hammer.

He put the pistol in his pocket and picked up the safety hammer from the ground. He glanced at the fallen zombies on the floor as he spat fiercely on the ground, and then...

Jiang Chen was momentarily lost.

He's at the hospital but what now?

# Chapter 98: Dead End

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Jiang Chen jumped over the counter in the lobby of the hospital and hid under the table while holding his hammer.

His left arm was still bleeding and a piece of his flesh was badly mangled, but since he was injected with the genetic vaccine, the zombie bacterial infection should not affect him.

He took a deep breath as he tried to make his violently pumping heart calm down. He took out the revolver and unloaded the magazine.

10 bullets left.

With a trembling left hand, he pushed the magazine back in, put the revolver back in the original pocket, and took several deep breaths.

Though it sounded crazy, he couldn't muster any killing intent towards these dummies... Thinking of this, Jiang Chen could not help but reveal a wry smile.

It could be said that this was probably his calmest <Fury> state. There was not a single red dot in his sight, and despite facing a horde of zombies, there was no desire to for aggression.

Jiang Chen closed his eyes to clear his mind from the distracting thoughts as he earnestly searched every details in his head.

[There must be something wrong. The exit is obviously in front of him... but where exactly is it?]

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Jiang Chen carried the PK2000 into the room as he immediately assumed his battle stance for shooting, but there was a gun pointing at his head.

"Why?"

"Oh, nothing, I'm just thinking...is it really necessary?"

Jiang Chen placed the PK2000 and fuel rod on the ground as he raised both hands with a wry smile.

Even if he returned to the modern world, he would still appear in the same position which would expose his ultimate weapon. It would take three seconds to initiate self-destruction process after entering the password, but the muzzle at his head didn't look like it would give him the time.

[There is no bug...wait, maybe there is.]

Pieces of meat lump attached to the rows of hibernation bins lined up and the moving thin film made for a disturbing sight, but what made him even more disturbed was the gun pointing at his

head.

"Didn't you say that a bug threatened you?" Jiang Chen's hands were raised up as cold sweats poured across his forehead. His eyes secretly swept across the great expanse of the giant hall.

The layout was like that of a theater, however, instead of "spectator's seats", there were hibernation bins attached to a chunk of meat and a huge transparent pod can be seen in the center of the stage. In the midst of dark green liquid that churned with bubbles lied a naked girl floating peacefully just like a delicate piece of art. But Jiang Chen couldn't see much of her face due to the distance.

"That's right, a bug did threaten me so I captured it." The plate-sized drone had a barrel hanging below and there was a rather comically small TV on top of it. The figures in the TV were wearing a mask or maybe it didn't have the concept of face to begin with—just an abstract feature.

"Captured it?" Jiang Chen froze.

"Yes, it threatened to use corrosive liquid to melt my door as humorous as how you would want to weld my door. Hehe, so I let it in and then used the particle cannon to blow up half of its body," it said and an excessively long cannon fell from above. Jiang Chen couldn't help but break out a cold sweat while looking at it.

He stared at the frightening dent left on the ground and somewhat had difficulty swallowing.

"To my surprise, the rest of it seemed alive, so I dismembered it into pieces and raised it in the hibernation bin," the secret informant in the small TV shrugged and laughed merrily.

"What about the people in the hibernation bins?"

"They have been long dead so I reused the waste. I believe they won't mind. Oh, speaking of this, the person in the pod should look pretty good in accordance to your aesthetic standard. Would you feel any sexual desire if I bring her in front of you?" The secret informant blinked.

"...I believe no one would with a gun pointed at their head."

"Tsk, you humans are very troublesome," the secret teller shook its head. "But even if you want to have sex with her, I can't help you because I'm using the girl as a host to feed the bug's brain."

"Bug, brain?" Jiang Chen watched the hibernation pods, and the dark green giant pot in the center and his heart felt revulsion.

"That's right, I divided the bacterial hatching tissue of the bug and implanted them into the hibernation pods filled with organic matter. Where do you think the bacteria outside came from? I injected the bug's brain into the female's body in vivo who is also a player." The secret teller rolled its eyes and gave him a supercilious look.

"So you are the one behind this...so I got tricked by you." Jiang Chen felt the ice-cold metal pressing against his temple and smiled bitterly.

He never expected that he was being lied to from the very beginning. The powered armor being unable to block one shot from Klein particle was only to trick him out of the metal box.

A program that could deceive people? He had never considered the possibility from the start.

"You can say that again," the secret teller chuckled. The laughter was piercing inside the enormous empty hall.

"What do you gain from this?" Jiang Chen was still mulling over as he couldn't understand the reason behind the secret teller's action.

"Hm, benefits? Haha, you misunderstood something. I am not human, therefore, I lack the concept of loss and gain."

There was an approaching buzzing sound, and Jiang Chen saw a swarm of drones flocked above him.

The taunting expressions from countless small screens were very eerie but also appeared realistic at the same time.

[That's right, it is not a human even if it closely resembles a human.]

Jiang Chen smiled sardonically. He still couldn't figure out the secret informant's motive.

[Raise the bacteria-producing bug and use the mutant bacteria to destroy humanity? For now it could only destroy Wanghai City since the bacteria itself do not possess the ability to reproduce because it could only be produced by the mother bug. How long is a bacterium's life cycle? Not to mention those bacteria that were being consumed by zombies.]

"I have been waiting for far too long. Your fellow humans have not been able to supply me with experimental material for a long time. Just relying on the data written in hard drive is not enough for me to complete the final phase of evolution. But my drones can't leave through this door, so I couldn't personally capture those people outside which bothered me for many years.

"Fortunately, this little bug came to find me and wanted to occupy these organic matters to breed these strange bacteria. Luckily, I was able to satisfy it and I was able to efficiently dissected it into many pieces. I believe as long as I let those bugs out to cause trouble, sooner or later someone will come in to play with me. Hehe."

The secret teller in the small screen produced a screeching laugh as a countless number of eyes gazed directly at Jiang Chen.

"Evolve into advanced artificial intelligence at all cost is the purpose you've given me."

Its voice wasn't cold but rather carefree, but it sent a chill down his spine.

"That's insane."

"Hehe, I don't have a concept of insanity," the secret informant shrugged.

"I'm referring to the person who created you."

"Perhaps? Hard to say. But since you are here, I have to ask you to cooperate." The secret teller grinned.

"Oh? I'm just an ordinary person. I don't know how to program." He gave the secret teller a cautious look.

"That's fine, I only need you to cooperate with me to play a game. You can play your game, whereas I only need to collect data," the secret teller said casually.

[Play? It doesn't sound like a good thing. But if I traveled back to escape, I could still get out. But with so many drones, I would still be shot into pieces when I came back,] he thought calmly. He took a deep breath and asked, "Is this the game these dead people played while they were still alive?"

"That's right, you can choose any hibernation pod to start with,"



the secret teller beamed.

"Then, I'll become an organic substance to culture the bacteria?" Jiang Chen eyed the secret teller contemptuously.

"No, no, no, I won't do anything to you until your heart stops beating. Of course, if you refuse, I might just turn you into a fertilizer right this second. I trust that the people on the surface will go down to look for you." Killing people off wouldn't trigger a sense of guilt in a program so the secret teller tone was cheerful, but it's precisely because of that carefree tone that it gave him the chill.

"Looks like I have no reason to refuse," said Jiang Chen and walked to the hibernation pod in front of him.

"That's right. After all, this is the purpose you have given me." The drone with small TV followed him and the secret informant merrily remarked, "You don't have to be so sad. Your body will face death eventually. But in the virtual world, you can experience multiple lives within seconds, that sounds great, doesn't it?"

Jiang Chen ignored it, but he stood beside a hibernation pod and pointed at it.

A group of drones flew over and the lid of hibernation pod gradually opened. A blast of bullets shot through and the disgusting meat chunks were torn into pieces. However, the hibernation pod wasn't damaged in the least and it looked quite durable.

There were varying degrees of disturbance among the piles of meat in the adjacent hibernation pod. It seemed like they could still sense the death of their own species.

It made sense as they originally belonged to one body but due to the hideous procedure made by drones, it was dismembered into many pieces.

There were few more drones that flew over, except this drone weren't equipped with weapons but rather with cleaning equipment.

After cleaning the gore and scums and dragging the remains away, the entire hibernation pod looked brand-new...but this didn't make Jiang Chen happy.

He was having internal conflict and to be honest, he didn't want to lie inside, however, there was a gun pointed at his temple.

Jiang Chen took a deep breath, as he made up his mind to take a gamble. Under the pleased look of the secret teller, he stepped one foot into the hibernation pod.

Suddenly, his movement ceased as he pointed at the center of the "stage". He lifted his head up to the secret teller and asked, "May I know the name of that beautiful lady?"

The secret informant paused before it smilingly asked, "What?"

Feeling aroused now?"

"Perhaps," Jiang Chen smiled noncommittally.

There was a cacophony of eerie laughter from countless numbers of small screens, and the secret teller looked at him with interest and spoke, "Her name is Lin Lin."

"oo? What an odd name" Jiang Chen mumbled and after hesitating for a moment, he still went inside.

[Take out the EP and remotely activate the fuel rod self-destruction the moment the hibernation pod closes?]

However, this thought was only fleeting because he had already felt a sharp pain behind his neck before losing control of his body.

The secret teller looked at the hibernation pod gleefully and closed the hatch.

"Hehe, let the game begins."

# Chapter 99: Another Road

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He remembered. Her name was Lin Lin.

[Perhaps this is the clue!]

Jiang Chen suddenly opened his eyes and quickly took out the terminal, and then connected to the hospital network.

<Access denied.>

"Dammit," Jiang Chen cursed. He cautiously climbed out of the front counter and peeked behind the table.

Night zombies were very dangerous in that even the smallest noise would draw their attention. Fortunately, their sense of smell was nowhere as sharp; even if it wasn't, their stench was overwhelming enough that they probably wouldn't be able to smell anything. The only thing he needed to be careful of was being spotted by them. Shadows wouldn't cause a lot of visual obstruction on them.

Zombies also had poor balance especially the freshly mutated ones. In this case, the stairs in front of the hospital would be an obstruction for the zombies outside, as long as one didn't make too much noise...

There were only two zombies in the hall. They were probably drawn to the gunfire and wandered off from the hallway. Jiang

Chen clenched the safety hammer in his hand and carefully sneaked behind a zombie and struck his hammer mercilessly at its head.

Blood splattered everywhere. Jiang Chen took another swing before the other zombies slowly turned around.

He lifted the hammer as he quickly ran to the direction of the reception.

"GRAAAGH—"

BANG!

A hammer was struck at the nurse on duty who lunged at Jiang Chen. He quickly shut the door behind him and dragged the cabinet to barricade the door of the reception room.

The sound from the door creaking and his movements certainly alerted the attention of the wandering zombies on the first floor. At that moment however, Jiang Chen didn't pay heed to it and ignored the sound of someone hitting the door. He then turned the computer on in the reception room and used the terminal connected to the hospital intranet to search for the name <Lin Lin>.

"Goddammit, don't let me down." Jiang Chen waited anxiously for the bar to load and prayed that the power wouldn't be suddenly cut off at this time.

Although there are backup generators in the hospital, he didn't want to take the risk of searching for its switch. Regardless of how strong his body and breakthroughs were, his stamina was still limited. Facing against zombies in the entire building was just unrealistic.

"Yes!"

Jiang Chen excitedly rushed in front of the computer.

<3rd Floor, Room 103, Bed 01>

Sure enough, the girl was a key character and he was lucky to get her name.

Jiang Chen hastily pulled out the holographic image of the hospital and confirmed its location. However, just as he was about to break through the door, something unexpected happened.

Power outage!

The entire hospital was blanketed in darkness and even the faint lights went out, which made him completely blind.

However, zombies have night vision.

[Dammit,] Jiang Chen cursed in his mind as he glanced at his still

bleeding left arm. However, there was no medical supply in the reception room.

He was running out of time. If he couldn't make it on time, he would have to do it all over again.

While taking a deep breath, he opened the drawers.

Notebook, pen, tape, paper towel...flashlight!

He quickly unrolled the paper towel and haphazardly wrapped it around his wound with tape to stop the bleeding.

Since this was a game, he didn't give it more thought whether it was hygienic or not.

He found a paper-thin phone on the body of the nurse and set it up to alarm in 10 seconds, and then threw it out the window of the reception room.

The loud alarm undoubtedly attracted all the attention of the zombies as they rushed madly to the location of the phone.

Jiang Chen seized this opportunity to run out of the room. The alarm wouldn't keep the zombies' attention for long. Once the zombies realized it was not breathing, they would start ignoring it.

The hallway was pitch black and it was a good thing Jiang Chen

had a flashlight he could use. At any rate, the zombies could even see in the dark so there was no point hiding in the dark, thus he kept the light on while dashing frantically to the stairs.

There were two zombies on top of the stairs and after discovering him, they lunged at him.

However, due to the asymmetry of the steps, the zombies fell on their own after going down stairs.

Jiang Chen went up and brandished his hammer twice and then continued to go up without turning back.

It was more crowded on the second floor, so naturally, the mutant zombie population here was denser. The zombies in the hallway were alerted by the noise but still met with the obstacle at the stairs. The hungry horde flocked around his direction and rabidly move forward, and just like what he expected, they all tripped at the last step and stumbled down.

Jiang Chen's scalp went numb while looking at the horde of zombies behind him. He gritted his teeth and continued his way to the third floor.

Luckily, there were fewer zombies on the third floor. After clobbering four zombies with the safety hammer, he successfully made it to Room 103.

He broke the door open without hesitation and secured the door



behind him with a safety hammer inserted between the door handle.

BANG! BANG!

Jiang Chen leaned against the door for a little while to ensure that the zombies couldn't open the door before he backed away from the door little by little.

That' when he noticed a pair of eyes watching him.

It was from a frail figure leaning against the window. The girl was quietly observing him with her hands casually tucked into a large white coat, giving off an unseemly and silly impression.

And that look.

How to describe that look? The look was quite subtle.

It's as though she was looking at a bug.

"Eh—you even came here." The girl glanced at Jiang Chen indifferently and sighed.

"Are you Lin Lin?" Jiang Chen took a deep breath and then asked tentatively.

He wanted to know how to leave the game, but he wasn't sure which side the girl was on. Was she on the artificial intelligence's side? Or she didn't want to help either side?

"That's right, and?" Lin Lin prompted impatiently.

With a wry smile, Jiang Chen took a few steps forward and tried to close their distance to show his friendly intention...

"STOP! Who said you can come closer?" Jiang Chen hadn't even taken a few steps before a disdainful look appeared on Lin Lin's face. She gave him a ferocious look and cursed under her breath, "Low life."

Jiang Chen was prepared to talk nicely, but her words immediately infuriated him.

"What, what are you doing?"

She was unable to keep the fear from her voice when she saw Jiang Chen approaching her with an unpleasant look.

Seeing her frightened look, Jiang Chen couldn't help the wicked grin forming on his face.

"Me? Of course, I want to—"

**BANG!**

The door was knocked down violently, and a metallic screeching sounded through the door.

WHOOSH!

Yao Tingting's entire body was covered in blood and there was a bloodcurdling chainsaw in her hands. She wore a blank yet crazed look.

BANG!

Smoke floated from the muzzle as the bullet penetrated her head without resistance.

Jiang Chen's was holding a gun and had a perplexed complexion as he stared at the pale but hollow eyes.

"Oh? That girl is your lover, isn't she? Hehe, you're pretty cruel —" The voice full of contempt suddenly halted because of the gun pointing at her temple.

Looking at the pair of cold eyes, she couldn't continue with her act of haughtiness anymore.

"Ha-haha," Lin Lin forced out a laugh. Her expression was rigid and her eyes wavered between the gun and Jiang Chen's eyes, "This is just a virtual world. So what if you kill me."

Looking at Lin Lin's act of bravado, Jiang Chen burst out laughing.

"It is indeed useless. But the pain doesn't disappear, does it? Tell you what, memory reset no longer works on me, so you have two choices right now: help me leave this place, or I'll kill you with the cruelest method I know and kill myself, then I'll come after you again. This is just a game, isn't that right? It won't matter if this is repeated a thousand times, will it?" Jiang Chen's face turned grimmer and grimmer.

Since she acted like she didn't want to say anything, he had to resort to coercion.

"You, you devil! You, you can't r\*pe me!" Lin Lin screamed hysterically while covering her head and retreating backwards.

Jiang Chen froze.

"Huh?" [Did I say that I'm going to r\*pe you?]

"You must be r\*ping me with your eyes right now! And you must be thinking of using your big \*\*\* to \*\*\* my \*\*\* and see me disgraced, and then insult me while wearing your evil smile, right! Wooo—" Lin Lin's face was full of shame, and she was staring at him with teary eyes. Both of her hands covered her shoulder while she shrunk back.

Jiang Chen was utterly dumbfounded, and after a long while, he cursed out.

"Fu\*k!"

"No—" Lin Lin timidly raised her hands up and retreated more before she was startled by his sudden outburst.

[What kind of imagination is this...]

Jiang Chen's expression went rigid and his mouth twitched.

He stepped forward and reached out to hold her chin up, put on the most vicious look he could think of and stared into the pair of frightened eyes.

"I'm not going to waste any more time with you. Tell me how to get out of here now!"

"You, you can't beat it, so what good it would be if you're able to leave! It's a demon! It will force you to go back to the game—" Jiang Chen's malevolent words had broken down her mental fortitude, and she hysterically screamed out.

"You don't have to worry about it. I naturally have my ways." Jiang Chen eyes narrowed.

"So what if you leave? I know exactly what the outside world is

like right now." Lin Lin shivered, but she managed to muster enough courage to raise her head. "What's wrong with staying here?"

"It's not good however you look at it." Jiang Chen looked at her in surprise and laughed. "Are you really willing to be manipulated by a program? To be manipulated repeatedly for a thousand times?"

"You brought that upon yourself! I'm sure you're already aware that any starting point in the game is considered as Safe Zone. If you don't go out, it will not trigger any plot, then it won't be able to do anything to you! Do you understand? This is the biggest bug of the game, and as long as you break through the barrier in your memory, you can continue to stay—"

"You said you stayed in the room the entire time?" Jiang Chen interrupted her.

Lin Lin gave Jiang Chen a contemptuous look, and then fearfully glanced at the gun in his hand.

"That's right, as long as I don't go out and continue to play the 'girl in the ward', it won't trigger any plot to advance. Hehe, do you understand now? The artificial intelligence can't do anything to you. Although there is a dumba\*s lying outside the door but as long as you don't leave, she wouldn't be able to enter this room! This is the setting and it can't be changed!"

She noticed that Jiang Chen was looking at her with a peculiar expression.

"What, what do you want..."

That look made her feel sick. She felt instinctual fear towards the man.

"I feel sorry for you."

But she was mistaken. It was a look of pity and not of a wicked intention she had initially thought.

"Ah?" This time, it was Lin Lin's time to be surprised. Her mouth was skew as she blankly looked at Jiang Chen who put the gun down.

"How many weeks had it been?"

"Nth cycle, who would remember these things?" Lin Lin muttered.

"If I hadn't guessed incorrectly, you wouldn't have died in the pod, right? So in the real world, you've probably spent 20 years, and if we convert that into game time, 200 thousand years? 200 million years? You've stayed in this cramped, little room?" Jiang Chen gave the room a once-over.

"It's no big deal. I selectively follow the rules of the game and reset part of my memories," Lin Lin mumbled and bowed her head

before looking away reluctantly. "So you, inferior creature, are so troublesome that you can't even bear it for a few days..."

"A few days" were obviously referring to the time in real world.

To Lin Lin's surprise, when he heard the words "inferior creature", he didn't reveal an angry expression, but instead stared into her eyes for a long time before sighing and then talked about things not related to this world.

"The outside is in shambles right now, the rural areas are better. The entire downtown is like a huge reactor. I haven't been to the coastline, so the situation there is not clear. The entire Wanghai City—no, to be precise—the entire world is like this."

"Hehe, that's really a pity so I say, why don't you—"

Jiang Chen gazed at her with a look full of meaning and interrupted her then continued talking to himself, "But people are still trying their best to survive even when the war left the world in shambles. Despite of the elites betraying their responsibilities to board the spacecraft in hope of going to the stars, the people who were left behind haven't given up on this world yet. They are truly living, no one day is the same, no one day is false—"

"Why are you telling me this?" Lin Lin interrupted him, her eyes were moving uneasily.

"Don't you want to see the outside?"



[Don't you want to see the outside?]

Lin Lin felt her heart fractured as her widened eyes averted his eyes.

"...That's impossible, do you really think the secret protector would allow you leave the game?" Although the mocking tone was still there, it no longer had its previous willful tone.

"I'll deal with it. Do you trust me?" Jiang Chen tried to make himself sound cordial. He could vaguely sense that although the girl had confined herself inside this ward to run away from everything, had a bad temper and was slightly mental, but in the end, she was still just a girl.

[Therefore, there's still a possibility of tricking her...ahem, possibility of persuading her.]

Lin Lin's eyes looked conflicted, and it was apparent that she was fed up with the endless cycle.

"I, I am afraid of pain. If you fail, that damn artificial intelligence may implant something else in my body," Lin Lin said as she looked at him with tears in her eyes as though she had been wronged.

"You're interested, aren't you?"

"Well... Not sure—"

"Just leave everything to me. You only need to tell me how to end this game. I have 100% confidence that I can take care of that damn artificial intelligence." Jiang Chen held Lin Lin's shoulder with both hands and stared earnestly into her eyes while continuing to exert pressure on her.

He couldn't back down now. If he showed the slightest hesitation, it would frighten the "turtle" that finally stuck her head out after all this trouble.

[Well, although it might not be appropriate to describe this girl like a turtle, that's the main point.]

After struggling to make a decision, Lin Lin timidly asked, "120%?"

"Absolutely! 120%!" Jiang Chen nodded patiently and answered with certainty.

Seeing the confidence in his expression, Lin Lin finally decided to talk, and a faint red color could be seen on her pale face.

Finally, she made up her mind.

"In the hospital's underground parking lot, there's a switch is next to the emergency fire button of 005 parking spot. That's the entrance to the 005 survival base and the 'console' of the entire

game... But it appears that you don't have a lot of time left." After completing her sentence, Lin Lin looked at the clock on the wall with a complex expression.

"Huh?" Jiang Chen was flabbergasted then looked backward.

<11:55 pm>

"On the first day, the secret teller can't reset the game, but on the second day, it will be able to reset the game," Lin Lin said reluctantly.

"Fu\*k!"

Jiang Chen was enraged by her dilly-dallying.

# Chapter 100: Fallout Shelter 005

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Under Lin Lin's shocked gaze, Jiang Chen sprinted out the door, and then quickly returned. Except for this time, he carried a chainsaw with him. Combined with the grin on his face, it seemed quite vicious.

"You, what are you trying to do?" Lin Lin shivered, curled up in a corner as she watched on in horror.

But Jiang Chen didn't bother with her. He tested the sensitivity of the chainsaw before planting a foot firmly on the windowsill and jumping out with the same wicked smile.

Still frightened, Lin Lin panted as she tried to calm her violently heaving chest.

[This is the third floor! He jumped down just like that?]

-

As both feet slammed into the ground, Jiang Chen's body smoothly dropped and rolled, managing to break the fall together with his reflex of 48. The only disappointment with fury though was that it could not enhance bone strength, and an excruciating pain needled outwards from his feet to the entirety of his legs.

"Grhhh—"

Zombies had already detected the noise, and they shambled their way with increasing acceleration towards his direction.

A glimpse of insanity flashed across Jiang Chen's face. He promptly lifted the chainsaw and mashed the power switch.

Whooooosh—!

Accompanied by the deafening screeches of metal, he sprinted towards the zombies that leapt towards him and forcefully shoved ahead with the chainsaw in hand.

The shrill screeching continued, now accompanied by the grinding sounds of metal cutting through flesh and bone. The resistance against his palm as well as the agitation in his stomach made him grit his teeth and push forward.

"Ahhhhhh!"

He swung the chainsaw and hacked the zombies into pieces, letting the black blood stain his entire face and shirt. Jiang Chen roared, maintaining his sprint as he desperately ran towards the underground parking.

Fortunately, the fury state was not excited by the data-simulated blood; in a normal instance, this amount of blood would have had him following his instincts and running into the middle of the zombie horde.

Recalling the map from the reception room, Jiang Chen carried the screeching chainsaw and gouged the window open to the bathroom and jumped inside, blocking the zombies at the window.

He chopped up two female zombies who had their bottoms half-covered before kicking through the bathroom door and dashing out.

The area outside of the reception room was full of zombies; he couldn't go through the main hall, so he opted to cut through.

He didn't stop for a single moment; there was no time to care about exaggerated movements attracting zombies. Jiang Chen pushed through the office door to the bathroom and kicked the door into pieces.

Inside the dark hallway, zombies had already begun to howl. After rushing into the room, Jiang Chen dragged the cupboard to block behind him and ran to the window without turning to look back.

He broke through the window using his chainsaw and jumped out.

The zombies rushed the door, tripping over the fallen cupboard, some managing to crawl swiftly into the room. But Jiang Chen had already escaped outside, and after chopping through a few more wandering zombies, ran for his life into the underground parking.

There was half a minute left.

No zombies to be seen in the underground parking.

Jiang Chen gritted his teeth and threw away the chainsaw. He grabbed the flashlight he had found in the reception room and scanned the pitch-black area.

Here it is!

The number "005" was painted at the top in white, far away from him. Jiang Chen dashed towards it and smashed the red button.

The floor opened, and he jumped in without hesitation.

The last he glimpsed were the fading pieces of the world's edges.

[Thank god, I made it.]

-

Just as Jiang Chen had assumed and prayed for, the game reset didn't have any influence on the game control. This was the end of the entire game, where the data was documented. If his guess was correct, then there should have been a place prepared for Lin Lin.

Lin Lin's status was not as simple as it seemed; she was at least a

scientist. Everyone had died, but only she had managed to flow into the veil unscathed.

But even if the control was prepared for her, she was unable to use it anymore.

The artificial intelligence had authority over the lab in the real world, so even if she came into control, the secret teller would force her to return.

It was an interesting design. Most likely neither the game nor the chief scientist of the entire experiment would have imagined the artificial intelligence would use the security system to threaten the experimenters.

Or perhaps the protocol had designed the artificial intelligence to do so, but would a monster who can think be expected to follow these rules? For example, if the secret teller, or secret protector, determined that its purpose would never be fulfilled without harming humans, how would it process this conflicted logic?

Based on the prioritization system, the greatest probability was that it removed the protocols set in place.

Jiang Chen walked to the end of the tunnel. On the large wall was engraved "PAC 005 survival base, non-civil usage survival base."

Below the door was an electronic lock.



He stood in front of it for a while before letting out a sigh. He never asked for the password from Lin Lin, but he had already guessed it.

Extending his finger, he input the password on the touch screen.

It was the initial name of the secret teller, or secret protector, but obviously, the talkative secret teller had accidentally let it slip out.

For everything that it wanted to hide, the artificial intelligence was still too blatant. Even if it was smart enough to deceive humans, on the matter of being smooth, it failed to learn a single bit from humans.

After all, it was not something that could be processed through logic alone.

The door opened, the truth inside.

Jiang Chen hesitated briefly, then smiled and walked in.

Once he crossed this door, the memories behind him would become irrelevant.

Although it was fictitious, it was still sixteen years of life.

The memories most likely belonged to the original owner of the hibernation chamber.

Once he passed through the seven doors of the survival base, what was most likely a monitoring room full of electronic devices and screens appeared before him.

In the middle of the room was someone Jiang Chen had not expected to see.

"Looks like someone made it over here." A Caucasian man with short stubble smiled at Jiang Chen and extended his hand.

Although he hadn't seen—no, perhaps he had. In the sports facility. He'd been in a power armor suit with his face covered by a helmet, but Jiang Chen still recognized him.

"Hello, Colonel George?" Jiang Chen walked up to shake his hand.

"Oh? Since you know my name already, you must have read the journal." George did not seem surprised at all as he shook Jiang Chen's hand before releasing it.

"Correct. According to the plot, I saw you in the sports facility." Jiang Chen's expression was rather odd as he didn't know what sort of mentality he should have to see this person.

"The plot in the sports facility? That's the one designed with my memory as the blueprint." George seemed to be reminiscing.

It was Jiang Chen who was shocked instead. He hadn't observed the dead body being infected by the meat chunks.

"If I guessed correctly, you should be the later experimenter. You're using my hibernation chamber by the looks of it. I've already died in real life."

"Then how are you existing? Artificial intelligence?" Jiang Chen didn't understand.

"They copied all of the data in my brain onto the hard drive. I can be considered to be a basic artificial intelligence." George smiled.

"I have a feeling that you're closer to an advanced artificial intelligence rather than an intermediary one."

Since he already passed the game portion, and the time in the game was a fraction of the real world's, Jiang Chen no longer felt rushed and freely chatted with George.

But despite beating the game, there were still many questions left on his mind.

"That's only an illusion." George shrugged. "I stand from George's perspective to perform logical questions and answers, but I don't possess an intermediary artificial intelligence's ability to think, or

an advanced artificial intelligence's ability to have 'emotions'."

"Is there a difference? From my perspective, you're just like a person." Jiang Chen raised his eyebrows, still confused.

"Of course there's a big difference. What you're talking to is a specter of George, not an artificial intelligence," George said to Jiang Chen's incomprehension. He then walked to a screen and pressed a button on the control panel.

"I've been injected with a genetic vaccine, the advanced type. So I realized that being able to escape the brainwashing was not only due to my brain cell strength, but also emotion."

"Emotion?" Jiang Chen asked, unsure why the colonel suddenly brought this up.

"Something a machine would never truly possess. It's like how even if you teach a parrot to talk, you could never teach it human emotion. Science seems to have proved the possibility of expressing emotion with pure logic, but from a human point of view, I still don't agree with this." George fiddled with a few buttons on the touch screen.

The full-sensory screen began to play scenes that were familiar yet also distant to Jiang Chen.

"This is the memory before the N-1 cycle. You may or may not have experienced some of it."

It did feel like he had encountered them before. Could this be the feeling of déjà vu?

There was a happy ending where both managed to escape, but mostly, they were bad endings. The rape incident by the NATO soldier who dropped from the skies was only one of them. Jiang Chen even saw one where Yao Tingting realized the protagonist cheated on her and dissected him at her home with a chainsaw.

The scene made Jiang Chen shiver. He finally knew where the chainsaw came from.

"The standard plot should be a five-day cycle, but because you broke the memory blockade in the N-cycle, the secret teller used its power to trigger the fifth-day plot on the fourth day. If you follow the standard plot, what you experience will most likely be what I experienced the most."

"That?" Jiang Chen recalled the plot in the sports facility, suddenly remembering a detail that was mentioned in the diary.

"The female character's design was based on that girl. I'm guessing you've already read the diary." George murmured to himself, "If I had just disciplined my troops, she would not have died in humiliation. Maybe this was my punishment? The game created a fictitious me, put my consciousness into a boy that liked her, and through an endless number of cycles, collected emotional data on hatred, regret, and guilt."

Jiang Chen's mouth twitched; he didn't know what to say.

"Out of five hundred ten experimenters, four hundred nine managed to escape the experiment, but all ended up being forced back into the game. The emotion in the game reflected onto the real body. Crying in the game stimulated the lacrimal gland, anger stimulated the amygdala, and all of these happened instantaneously in reality. Everyone eventually died of a seizure, including me."

The middle-aged man's facial expression remained fixed, as if his life and death had nothing to do with him. He then pressed a few more buttons on the control panel.

"The exit is here, the truth is also here. The choice is in your hands. To leave? Or to stay here and spend your life in eternity."

"Is that even a question? The answer is obvious." Jiang Chen laughed.

Without another word, George extended his hands in a "please" gesture, then stood aside.

# Table of Contents

## [Peerless Martial God](#)

[Synopsis](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Chapter 1: A Disaster Caused by a Can of Coke](#)

[Chapter 2: Interdimensional Bracelet](#)

[Chapter 3: I Need Gold](#)

[Chapter 4: Gold Bar](#)

[Chapter 5: Tomato Fried Eggs](#)

[Chapter 6: Roshan](#)

[Chapter 7: The Sixth Street](#)

[Chapter 8: Huizhong Mercenaries](#)

[Chapter 9: The Plan](#)

[Chapter 10: The Ghetto Full of Talent](#)

[Chapter 11: A Cozy Dinner](#)

[Chapter 12: Battle of the Construction Site](#)

[Chapter 13: Battle of the Construction Site Continued](#)

[Chapter 14: The Filthy Underground Sewerage System](#)

[Chapter 15: Fury](#)

[Chapter 16: Cashing Out](#)

[Chapter 17: Today, I am wealthy!](#)

[Chapter 18: Encountering an old friend](#)

[Chapter 19: The Stereotypical Prince Saves the Princess Scene](#)

[Chapter 20: Xia Shiyu in Despair](#)

[Chapter 21: Work for me?](#)

[Chapter 22: Sanya Vacation](#)

[Chapter 23: Upper Class](#)

[Chapter 24: Liu Yao](#)

[Chapter 25: Robert's Invitation](#)

[Chapter 26: The Middleman](#)

[Chapter 27: Enjoying Life](#)

[Chapter 28: The Return](#)

[Chapter 29: Eagle's Crash](#)

[Chapter 30: Back Home](#)

[Chapter 31: Family Meeting?](#)

[Chapter 32: Sun Jiao's Past](#)

[Chapter 33: Back to Sixth Street](#)  
[Chapter 34: The Inner Circle](#)  
[Chapter 35: Fishbone Food Corporation](#)  
[Chapter 36: Trade Route](#)  
[Chapter 37: Industrial Area](#)  
[Chapter 38: Slave Arrangement](#)  
[Chapter 39: Jobs and Responsibilities](#)  
[Chapter 40: Game Development](#)  
[Chapter 41: The Developing Fishbone](#)  
[Chapter 42: Home](#)  
[Chapter 43: Robert's Problem](#)  
[Chapter 44: Xia Shiyu's Apartment](#)  
[Chapter 45: The Iraq Trip](#)  
[Chapter 46: Rescue](#)  
[Chapter 47: The Unexpected](#)  
[Chapter 48: Refugees](#)  
[Chapter 49: The Flames of War](#)  
[Chapter 50: FBA Agent](#)  
[Chapter 51: Ayesha's Determination](#)  
[Chapter 52: Back Home](#)  
[Chapter 53: Five Hundred Million USD](#)  
[Chapter 54: Eagle's Crash Part Two](#)  
[Chapter 55: Purchasing a Mansion](#)  
[Chapter 56: The Surprising Reunion](#)  
[Chapter 57: Who's the Swan?](#)  
[Chapter 58: The Intimacy in the Car](#)  
[Chapter 59: Luxury](#)  
[Chapter 60: House Hunting](#)  
[Chapter 61: Extravagant Spending](#)  
[Chapter 62: Base Construction](#)  
[Chapter 63: Virtual Reality Training Chamber](#)  
[Chapter 64: Basic Artificial Intelligence](#)  
[Chapter 65: Her Vulnerable Side](#)  
[Chapter 66: Hospital Conflict](#)  
[Chapter 67: A Pillow just when you need it](#)  
[Chapter 68: Cured?](#)  
[Chapter 69: The Future 1.0 That Shocked the World](#)  
[Chapter 70: Catching the Wind](#)  
[Chapter 71: Ayesha's Unique Trait](#)



[Chapter 72: I Have Only Two Words for You](#)  
[Chapter 73: Career Fair](#)  
[Chapter 74: Alumni Dinner](#)  
[Chapter 75: Because of Regret?](#)  
[Chapter 76: Negotiation with 361](#)  
[Chapter 77: Press Conference](#)  
[Chapter 78: Test?](#)  
[Chapter 79: Game Online](#)  
[Chapter 80: Zombies' Change](#)  
[Chapter 81: Yao Yao's Thought](#)  
[Chapter 82: Wasteland Economics?](#)  
[Chapter 83: Helping Each Other](#)  
[Chapter 84: Zombie Waves](#)  
[Chapter 85: This is the Apocalypse](#)  
[Chapter 86: I don't reason](#)  
[Chapter 87: Burn!](#)  
[Chapter 88: PAC Remains](#)  
[Chapter 89: Ignorance](#)  
[Chapter 90: Conflicted](#)  
[Chapter 91: The Uncanny Valley](#)  
[Chapter 92: Who is the Ghost](#)  
[Chapter 93: Colonel's Diary](#)  
[Chapter 94: Fear from the Sky](#)  
[Chapter 95: The Imperfection in the Perfect Plan](#)  
[Chapter 96: Inescapable](#)  
[Chapter 97: Zombie Invasion](#)  
[Chapter 98: Dead End](#)  
[Chapter 99: Another Road](#)  
[Chapter 100: Fallout Shelter 005](#)